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ABSTRACT

This report evaluates how good a job the states are doing when it comes to putting policies in place that will improve teacher quality. Forty-nine states are included; Oregon and the District of Columbia did not participate in the survey. States receive grades in whether: (1) they hold schools, principals, and teachers accountable for results; (2) they have empowered schools to make personnel decisions; (3) they have quality control systems to ensure that teachers know their subjects, but that do not involve needless regulation; and (4) they have opened the doors into teaching to talented candidates who have not attended schools of education. Grades are based on 29 indicators, each linked to a policy designed to boost the quality of the teaching force. Overall, the states earn a grade of "D+" for their teacher quality policies, although Texas and Florida both receive "A's." The report describes what these two states are doing to earn these grades. Across the United States, accountability is still more talk than action, as state-by-state reports demonstrate. (SLD)

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The Quest For Better Teachers: Grading The States

REPORT CARD	
Accountability for Results	C
Staffing Autonomy	F
Subject Mastery	B
Multiple Pathways	D
Total Grade	D+

U.S. AVERAGE

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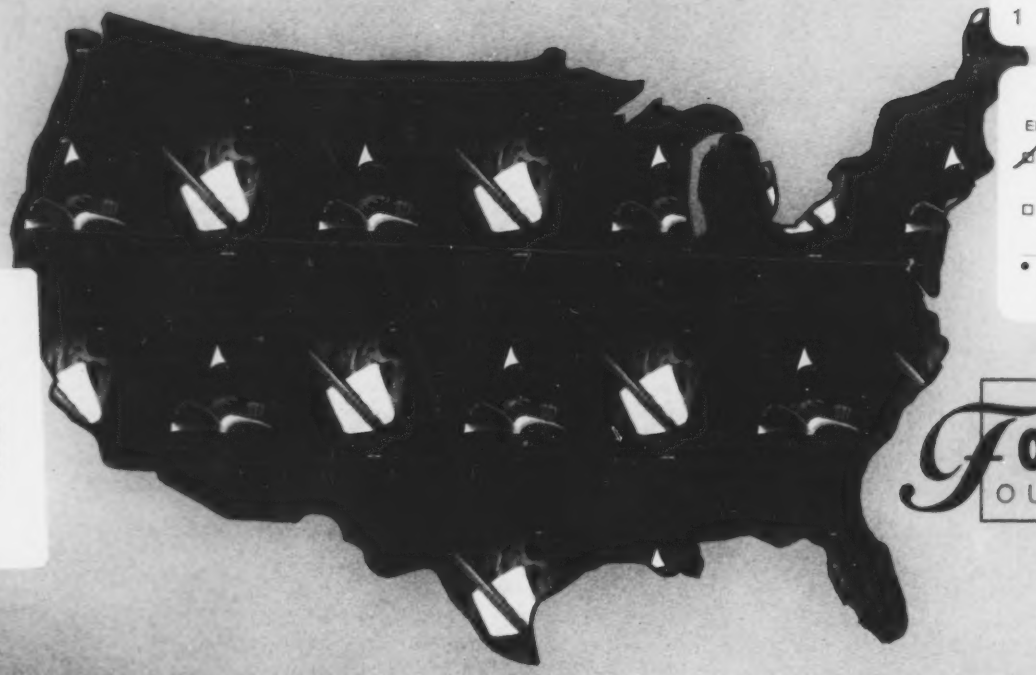

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The Quest For Better Teachers: Grading The States

By Chester E. Finn, Jr.,
Marci Kanstoroom, and
Michael J. Petrilli

With technical assistance
from Sheila Byrd

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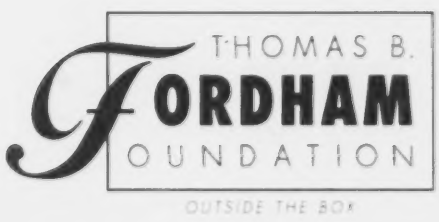

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FOREWORD

Most states are beginning to get serious about boosting the quality of their teaching force. Unfortunately, most of the steps they are taking point in the wrong direction. This "report card" contains plenty of evidence of that fact—together with some happy exceptions and hopeful signs.

The present report follows on the heels of two previous publications. The first was *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, a policy manifesto released in April 1999. (Its text and a list of its signers are available on our web site—www.edexcellence.net.) It offered a set of principles to guide state policymakers in their pursuit of quality teachers for every classroom. Those principles were based on careful analyses of available research, the experience of many states, and the judgment of experts. Nevertheless, they turned out to be sharply contrary to the conventional wisdom in this area.

In July, we followed the manifesto with *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, a volume devoted to research on teacher quality. (It's available on our web site as well, and can be ordered by calling 1-888-TBF-7474.) It includes essays and original research on the effects of different policies on teacher quality and student achievement. Some essays brought rigorous analysis to bear on the present regime of teacher certification. Others explored in more detail just how today's certification system works. Still others analyzed proposed reforms. *Better Teachers, Better Schools* makes a compelling case that policies based on the conventional wisdom about teacher quality will fail: more regulation will not bring us better teachers, not, at least, without inducing new and worrisome problems, such as deterring able and well-educated people from teaching. A far more promising approach is to deregulate entry into teaching, devolve personnel authority to individual schools, and then hold those schools and their staffs to account for the student learning that occurs in them.

In the present report card, the third in this series, we evaluate how good a job the states are now doing when it comes to putting policies into place that will improve teacher quality. (Forty-nine states are included; Oregon and the District of Columbia declined to participate in our survey. Perhaps they have something to hide.)

States receive grades in four categories: (1) whether they hold schools, principals, and teachers accountable for results; (2) whether they have empowered schools to make personnel decisions; (3) whether they have quality control systems in place that ensure that teachers know their subjects but that do not involve needless regulation; and (4) whether they have opened the doors into teaching to talented candidates who have not attended schools of education. Grades are based on twenty-nine indicators, each one linked to a specific policy that we believe states must adopt if they're serious about boosting the quality of their teaching force.

The news is not very good. Overall, the states earn a "D+" for their teacher quality policies. (The grades would have been even lower had we not engaged in grade inflation.) There are bright spots, though. Texas and Florida both receive "A's." As you read on, you will see what it is they are doing that warrants such grades.

This report card would not have been possible without the advice of an expert panel we assembled in Washington back in February to advise us on teacher quality. Its members included Dominic Brewer (Rand), Mary Butz (Manhattan Village Academy), Dan Goldhaber (Urban Institute), Eric Hanushek (University of Rochester), Tom Loveless (Harvard University), Michael Podgursky (University of Missouri),

Michael Poliakoff (Pennsylvania Department of Education), Diane Ravitch (Brookings Institution and Manhattan Institute), Lewis Solmon (Goldwater Institute and Milken Family Foundation), J.E. Stone (East Tennessee State University), Robert Strauss (Carnegie Mellon University), and Herbert Walberg (University of Illinois at Chicago). They developed the policy prescriptions and guided us toward indicators that would serve as acceptable gauges of whether states are carrying out such policies.

From there, the estimable Sheila Byrd carried the ball forward. Before starting her own education consulting firm, Sheila served as deputy director of California's Academic Standards Commission. For this project, she developed a 38-question survey that she provided to the states and followed up with telephone calls to contact persons in state education departments who had been designated by the chief state school officer. She also scoured existing data sources. Sheila worked tirelessly to gather the data and she evaluated it with great precision. We owe her an enormous debt of gratitude.

Readers interested in understanding what data these grades are based on, and how that information was analyzed and weighted, should look first at page 9 for a list of the indicators. All the scoring rules for this report card and complete data sources can be found at a location on our web site that serves as companion and back-up to this volume: www.edexcellence.net/better/teachers.html.

For several of our indicators, we relied heavily on data published in *Quality Counts '99*, an *Education Week*/Pew Charitable Trusts report on education in the fifty states. We also borrowed data from the Education Commission of the States, the Center for Education Reform, the U.S. Department of Education's *Digest of Education Statistics*, and *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis 1998-99*, published by the National Center for Education Information. We are very grateful to these organizations for making these data available.

To our knowledge, this is the first report card of its kind, certainly the first based on the "common-sense" principles first set forth in *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*. Despite the immense care that Sheila (and the Foundation staff whose names appear on the title page) took to collect accurate data and analyze them correctly, we do not doubt that some will disagree with our judgments and may find errors in our information. This is a field in tremendous flux in a number of states, and we were frequently presented with such issues as how much "credit" to give a new policy that has been announced but not yet implemented. In some cases, it was difficult to be certain what a state's policy is, such as situations where we were told that "The law says such-and-such is possible but in practice nobody does it." Our analytic efforts also suffered from data vacuums on some key points—see the web site for our "wish list" of data for future such reports—and was vulnerable to "grade inflation" on some others. (It was not hard, for example, to find out from a state whether it requires new teachers to pass a subject-matter test, but it proved impossible to determine how good those tests are or how high the passing score is set.) We regret any mistakes on our part.

We do not, however, make any apology for dissenting from the conventional wisdom in this vital field. Well-meaning though its proponents surely are, and laudable though a few of their recommendations are, we believe they are fundamentally wrong about how best to improve teacher quality in America. Nor are we alone in finding fault both with the present regime of teacher training and certification and with the conventional wisdom about how to change it. Critics, in fact, abound. John Merrow, host of PBS's *The Merrow Report*, made many of these same points in an episode broadcast this September called "Teacher Shortage: False Alarm?" *A Matter of Quality: A Strategy for*

Assuring the High Caliber of America's Teachers, released by the Milken Family Foundation in September, also echoed our critique of teacher training and hiring. And we expect the ranks of dissenters to grow.

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is a private foundation that supports research, publications, and action projects in elementary/secondary education reform at the national level and in the Dayton area. Further information can be obtained from our web site (http://www.edexcellence.net) or by writing us at 1627 K St., NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006. (We can also be e-mailed through our web site.) This report is available in full on the Foundation's web site, and hard copies can be obtained by calling 1-888-TBF-7474 (single copies are free). The Foundation is neither connected with nor sponsored by Fordham University.

Chester E. Finn, Jr., President
Thomas B. Fordham Foundation
Washington, DC
November 1999

Executive Summary

In April 1999, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation released a policy "manifesto," *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them.* Signed by dozens of governors, chief state school officials, eminent scholars, and leading educators, this statement set forth a common-sense strategy for boosting teacher quality.

The Strategy

I. **States should develop results-based accountability systems at the student, classroom, and school levels.**

   A. States should have a comprehensive, statewide accountability system for schools.

   B. States should utilize market forces to advance school-level accountability.

   C. States should hold principals accountable for school performance.

   D. States should have means for determining the effectiveness of individual teachers and holding them accountable for their students' learning.

II. **States should empower school-level administrators with the authority to make personnel decisions.**

   A. States should encourage the devolution of key decisions to school executives.

   B. Tenure should not interfere with reform goals.

   C. States should encourage differential pay.

III. **States should have quality control systems to ensure that teachers have mastered their subject matter and that they do no harm, but these systems should not involve excessive regulation.**

   A. States should perform background checks for all teaching candidates.

   B. States should require that teachers have a solid general education.

   C. States should ensure that teachers know the subjects they teach.

IV. **States should de-emphasize traditional teacher education and open the teaching profession to a larger pool of talented and well-educated people.**

   A. Standard certification programs should not be overly long or costly.

   B. States should publish consumer information about teacher preparation programs and their graduates, so that prospective students, employers, and the public can appraise the effectiveness of these programs.

   C. States should expand the pool of talented teaching candidates by allowing well-educated candidates who have not attended schools of education to teach.

   D. States should use financial incentive programs to attract talented teachers to their public schools.

Grading the States

During the summer, the Foundation gathered data on twenty-nine indicators by which to grade the states on the strength of their present policies vis-à-vis the common-sense strategy for teacher quality. Many of the data used were publicly available; others were gathered from a comprehensive state-by-state survey. The results are mostly disappointing:

- Overall, the states earn a "D+" for their teacher quality policies.
- Nine states earn A's or B's, eighteen earn C's, nine deserve D's, and thirteen flunk.
- As a whole, states do relatively well (B average) on "Subject Mastery"—for ensuring that all teachers know the subjects that they teach—and terribly (F average) on "Staffing Autonomy," which is a measure of how much control over personnel has been devolved to schools.

The state-by-state survey also yielded these findings:

- In twenty-one states, principals are allowed to be granted permanent tenure, which makes it nearly impossible to replace them even if their schools continually fail.
- In only two states can an ineffective teacher be easily replaced; all other jurisdictions grant lifetime tenure (or the equivalent) to teachers.
- Only four states look at how much a teacher's students are learning when they evaluate or relicense teachers.
- Twelve states have variable pay structures for teachers based on performance (merit pay) or marketplace conditions (differential pay).
- Only eight states have devolved personnel decisions to the school level.
- Just six states claim to prohibit out-of-field teaching; in others, teachers may teach outside the field in which they have been trained.
- Twenty-seven states offer signing bonuses, scholarship, or loan forgiveness programs to attract talented teachers to their public schools.

Conclusions

1) **Accountability for results is more talk than action.** In only a few states are adults—administrators or teachers—truly held accountable for school performance. Very few adults in today's education system have their jobs on the line.

2) **School-level autonomy is still an unfulfilled promise.** While there is mounting pressure for schools to improve, few schools have been empowered to make crucial decisions—especially regarding personnel.

3) **In the world of certification, it's easier to add than to subtract.** States seeking to "get serious" about teacher quality are adding many new rules and requirements—some of them good but many just creating more hurdles of doubtful worth.

4) **Symbolic change is no substitute for system-wide change.** States have adopted small "pilot programs," such as limited alternative certification and salary bonuses, but have largely failed to reform their long-established teacher personnel systems.

INTRODUCTION

How are the states doing when it comes to boosting teacher quality? Or, at least, how are they doing at developing and executing policies that are likely to boost teacher quality? Answering that question is the function of this report card. By surveying the states themselves and consulting independent data sources, we set out to appraise present state policies in one of the most important domains of education reform: attracting, deploying, and retaining effective teachers for U.S. classrooms.

First, of course, we had to determine what policies are most apt to work. This is a hotly contested topic in American education. Nobody is absolutely certain how best to overhaul this vital domain. There's agreement about the need for an overhaul, and reasonable consensus about the nature and severity of the problem, but a lot less coherence when it comes to solutions.

> How are the states doing when it comes to boosting teacher quality?

Two basic approaches have been offered to policymakers. One, which we have termed the "conventional wisdom," is most prominently associated with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) and has been embraced by a number of state officials and educators. It is, essentially, a regulatory strategy that would restrict entry into the classroom and that relies heavily on inputs and peer judgments as sources of quality control. The other, which we call the "common-sense approach," was set forth in the April 1999 policy manifesto, *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, published by this Foundation on behalf of a number of policymakers and education experts. It was elaborated in *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, a research volume that we published in July. It is, essentially, a deregulatory strategy that opens entry into teaching and, for quality control, relies primarily on students' learning as evidence of teachers' effectiveness.

This report card appraises state policies vis-à-vis the "common-sense" approach. We first set forth the kinds of policies that a state would want to have in place if it were following that approach. We then developed a set of indicators that provide reasonable (if incomplete) evidence of a state's actual progress in implementing such policies. Finally, we graded the states based on the data we were able to gather.

Those who favor the common-sense approach to teacher quality improvement will find these results interesting and, we believe, helpful in future policymaking. Those who have embraced the conventional wisdom wil no doubt be less enthralled.

Identifying the Problem

The present focus on teacher quality arises from mounting awareness that too few of today's teachers—and perhaps even fewer of tomorrow's—are well prepared for the challenges they face in a country bent on raising academic standards for its students.

A recent study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that only one in five teachers feels very well prepared.[1] Students who face high-stakes tests for promotion and graduation will need teachers with more subject matter knowledge and teaching prowess than ever before. Yet our present system for recruiting, preparing, and deploying teachers is not up to that momentous challenge.

While America is blessed with many fine teachers, we don't have enough of them, a problem that is more acute in some subjects and regions than others. We are not attracting enough of the best and the brightest to teaching, and not retaining enough of the best of those that we attract. According to Harvard economist Richard Murnane, "College graduates with high test scores are less likely to become teachers, licensed teachers with high test scores are less likely to take jobs, employed teachers with high test scores are less likely to stay, and former teachers with high test scores are less likely to return."[2]

> Policies meant to solve a problem are actually making it worse.

Another problem today is the many people who lack deep preparation in the subjects that they are trying to teach. While most public school teachers are certified, a college major or minor in the field is not always a prerequisite for subject area certification.[3] Moreover, teachers may be assigned to cover courses outside their main teaching field as a cost-saving measure or administrative convenience. The result: large numbers of teachers are expected to impart knowledge and skills in subjects in which they have neither a college major nor a minor: 56 percent of those teaching physics and chemistry in grades 7-12, 53 percent of those teaching history, 33 percent of those teaching biology, 33 percent of those teaching math, and 24 percent of those teaching English.[4]

The Romance of Regulation

What's most disturbing about the shortcomings of the present teaching force is the extent to which its problems are themselves caused or worsened by state policies, particularly those policies pertaining to licensure and certification. It seems that policies meant to solve a problem are actually making it worse.

State regulations governing teacher employment were meant to ensure that every child has a competent instructor. Today, however, they do not assure quality even as they interfere with the hiring and retention of outstanding individuals. The regulatory strategy itself contributes to the difficulty of assembling a world-class teaching force. It does so in five ways.

First, state regulations are not a reliable way of screening out ill-prepared candidates. The tests that future teachers must pass, for example, are typically pitched at so undemanding a level, and their cut-off scores are set so low, that they do little to deter individuals with limited intellectual prowess and scant subject matter knowledge.[5]

Second, burdensome certification requirements discourage well-educated and eager candidates who might make great teachers but are deterred by the cost (in time and money) of completing an approved teacher education program.

Third, the close link between teacher certification and schools of education means that pedagogical training is almost invariably given precedence over rich subject matter knowledge. This is not surprising. Training in pedagogy is what colleges of education exist primarily to provide.

Fourth, the regulatory strategy automatically focuses on "inputs" rather than results: on college courses taken, requirements met, time spent, credentials acquired, and activities engaged in rather than actual evidence of classroom effectiveness, particularly as gauged by student learning. Insofar as it even looks at results, it relies on subjective "peer" judgments—what do other teachers, professors and experts think of one's teaching—rather than objective measurement of a teacher's impact on her pupils.

Fifth, the regulatory strategy—like most such regimens—prizes uniformity and conformity. Rigid salary schedules mean that teacher pay reflects years of experience and degrees earned rather than any measure of performance (let alone "marketplace" conditions within the teaching field). There are few tangible rewards for excellence, and few sanctions for bad teaching.

The regulatory strategy, in a word, is bankrupt. To do more of what has already failed while expecting a different result recalls a familiar definition of madness. It's time, therefore, to consider a different approach to raising the quality of teachers for U.S. schools. As Secretary of Education Richard Riley said in February, "We can no longer fiddle around the edges of how we recruit, prepare, retain, and reward America's teachers."[6]

> There is little connection between licensing requirements and high-quality teaching.

The Conventional Wisdom and Its Shortcomings

Despite all that, a redoubling of regulatory zeal remains the education profession's knee-jerk response to the teacher quality problem. That approach was codified in the NCTAF's 1996 report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, and elaborated in a 1999 report that lists ten specific steps for states and communities to take.

Most of these are rooted in the same ideas that have been fruitlessly pursued for decades: that good teaching depends on specialized professional knowledge, that restricting entry is the surest form of quality control, that professional education organizations are best equipped to judge who is a good teacher, and that inputs are better measures of good teaching than the performance of one's pupils.

The NCTAF's leading suggestion for states is "'Just say no' to hiring unqualified teachers." On its face, this seems unimpeachable. One has to read closely to see that by "unqualified" teachers the NCTAF means people who are not fully certified. The NCTAF also urges states to "raise teacher standards," but this turns out to mean making teacher-training requirements more rigorous and extensive. Longer teacher education programs (e.g. five-year programs) are offered as models.

Many of the NCTAF's recommendations would transfer authority from local school boards and state agencies to professional education organizations. These groups would develop standards for how teachers are trained, tested, hired, and promoted—standards based on the principle of peer review. The NCTAF also recommends that states use uniform standards and assessments such as those developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and that they recognize and reward teachers who have achieved certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The idea that more—and more homogeneous—training of teachers is the key to solving the country's quality problem has innate appeal for states seeking to do something. Peer review sounds terrific, and it has the additional political virtue of shifting the burden of difficult personnel decisions from state policymakers to the profession itself. Thus a number of governors and legislators have clambered onto the NCTAF bandwagon. But are these the right answers? Will focussing on inputs, insisting that teachers acquire pedagogical knowledge before being allowed to teach, and turning over judgments about good teaching to the profession actually

contribute to improved student learning? At what cost? With what unintended consequences?

The case against the conventional wisdom was made in *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them* and is set forth in greater detail in *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, but let us briefly recap the main points.

Raising entry requirements for prospective teachers is an understandable reaction to the problem of low quality, but it won't be effective. All of the instruments that states can use to assess the skills and knowledge of teaching candidates are imperfect. Much research has sought to find the connection between teacher "input" qualities and the effectiveness of those teachers in actual classrooms. On balance, these studies indicate a modest association between certain teacher qualities and student performance. The problem is that the teacher characteristics that matter most to kids are not the qualities honed in schools of education. Nor are they amenable to government regulation.

> The conventional wisdom about teacher quality control via regulation rests on fragile, unreliable evidence.

In a meta-analysis of sixty studies of the effect of various school resources on pupil achievement, it was the verbal ability of teachers—not the degrees they had earned or the experience that they possessed—that had the strongest effect on student learning.[7] Other studies have found that the only advanced degrees that positively affect student learning are those specific to the subjects that the teachers teach, not degrees in education per se.[8]

The paucity of solid evidence pointing to the effectiveness of teacher licensure is striking; there is little connection between licensing requirements and high-quality teaching. Taking courses from an ed school and passing tests of basic skills and pedagogical knowledge may well have some positive effect on one's teaching, but researchers have not been able to find much. Hence those who control entry into teacher training programs and those who license candidates based on their test scores simply don't have enough information to predict who will be a good teacher.

The surest measure—some would say the only true measure—of good teaching is student learning. The best way to gauge this is to use "value-added" measures that capture the gain in academic achievement brought about by particular teachers. While good teachers do many other worthwhile things besides add to student learning—they help other teachers, are good citizens of their schools, are involved with parents, etc.—nothing they do is as important as academic achievement. Yet the factors most apt to induce achievement in one's pupils are not imparted by ed schools nor appraised by the kinds of tests that most states inflict on prospective teachers.

Why doesn't professional training contribute more to teacher effectiveness? For better or worse, the research base of today's pedagogical knowledge is uneven, incomplete, highly disputed, and vulnerable to ideological and interest group manipulation. It is this lack of grounding of teaching methods in solid and consistent research that contributes to the rampant faddism that we find in colleges of education. Some of the best known ideas embraced and promulgated there—"whole language" instruction in reading, for example—have proven to be of dubious educational value, despite claims by their boosters that they are grounded in research.

In sum, the conventional wisdom about teacher quality control via regulation rests on

fragile, unreliable evidence. We cannot be confident that the present teacher licensure system is connected with effective teaching, if by effective teaching we mean the likelihood that student learning will follow.

The Common-Sense Alternative

Since good teachers can be found in many places and educated in many ways, states should eliminate the hoops and hurdles that discourage good candidates from entering the classroom. Teacher hiring should be deregulated, and key personnel decisions should be devolved to the school level. In return for this autonomy, schools should be held accountable for producing results. Teachers, too, should be evaluated by the academic performance of their pupils.

It's almost as simple as that. Rather than regulating inputs, deregulation of entry into teaching, accompanied by accountability for school results, will be a surer way to provide quality control. The role of the state should be primarily to ensure that teachers do no harm. Deregulating the teaching profession in this way will not only expand the size but also raise the quality of the teaching profession.

States should empower principals and other school executives to hire, fire and reward teachers as they see fit, and then hold them accountable for their schools' results. Instead of being told whom they may or may not hire, principals should be able to recruit and employ the ablest people they can find, just as private and charter schools do today. Since every regulation that restricts entry to the profession excludes some potentially good teachers, regulation should be held to the barest minimum.

States should empower principals and other school executives to hire, fire and reward teachers as they see fit.

State policies to boost teacher quality via the commonsense approach come in four categories—and it is these against which present policies are appraised in the body of this report.

1) Accountability for Results

So that principals have every incentive to hire great teachers, states should develop results-based accountability systems at the student, classroom, and school levels. School-level accountability involves measuring pupil achievement and issuing report cards for schools. Ideally, these report cards include measures of how schools are doing relative to an absolute standard (e.g., the percentage of students passing tests based on state academic standards) and also how much each school has improved relative to its past performance. To examine the gains made by schools from one year to the next, pupils must take solid standards-based tests every year.

The information contained in the report cards should be disseminated to parents and the general public. States should rate schools or publicly identify low-performing schools. States should reward successful schools, and should have and use the authority to reconstitute or otherwise make major changes in failing schools.

States should also utilize market forces to foster school accountability. Market-based accountability can include various forms of school choice, such as open-enrollment public school choice, charter schools, or vouchers.

States should have results-based accountability systems for principals, too. Their jobs and salaries ought to be tied to school performance. There should be no permanent tenure (or collec-

The Common-Sense Strategy for Boosting Teacher Quality

1) States should develop results-based accountability systems at the student, classroom and school levels.

   A. States should have a comprehensive, statewide accountability system for their schools.

   B. States should utilize market forces to advance school-level accountability.

   C. States should hold principals accountable for school performance.

   D. States should have means for determining the effectiveness of individual teachers and holding them accountable for their students' learning.

2) States should empower school-level administrators with the authority to make personnel decisions.

   A. States should encourage the devolution of key decisions to school executives.

   B. Tenure should not interfere with reform goals.

   C. States should encourage differential pay.

3) States should have quality control systems to ensure that teachers have mastered their subject matter and that they do no harm, but these systems should not involve excessive regulation.

   A. States should perform background checks for all teaching candidates.

   B. States should require that teachers have a solid general education.

   C. States should ensure that teachers know the subjects they teach.

4) States should de-emphasize traditional teacher education and open the teaching profession to a larger pool of talented and well-educated people.

   A. Standard certification programs should not be overly long or costly.

   B. States should publish consumer information about teacher preparation programs and their graduates, so that prospective students, employers, and the public can appraise the effectiveness of these programs.

   C. States should expand the pool of talented teaching candidates by allowing well-educated candidates who have not attended schools of education to teach.

   D. States should use financial incentive programs to attract talented teachers to their public schools.

tive bargaining) for administrators. Principals are a vital part of management, not labor.

States should also have accountability systems for teachers, based on measures of student achievement. One such approach has been pioneered by William Sanders of the University of Tennessee, who analyzes student test results and has been able to determine how much individual teachers contribute to student learning. Such data are crucial for good personnel decisions.

Teacher tenure must not be allowed to interfere with good education.

2) School-level Autonomy Regarding Personnel

States should empower school-level administrators with the authority to make key personnel decisions. Building-level authority goes hand-in-hand with building-level accountability. Indeed, the whole gamut of personnel decisions bearing on teachers (including promotion, retention, and compensation) should be entrusted to school leaders.

Teacher tenure must not be allowed to interfere with good education. States should not confer lifetime tenure on the basis of seniority, and indeed should not prescribe a uniform tenure system at all. It should be possible to remove incompetent teachers at reasonable cost and within a reasonable period of time.

States should also encourage differential pay. Schools should be able to pay outstanding teachers (defined on the basis of student performance) more. (This means ending pay scales based on seniority rather than performance.) They should be able to pay teachers more based on labor market conditions, subject specialty, or hazardous duty (e.g., extra compensation for those who teach in difficult schools). A flexible salary structure would allow teacher pay to respond to marketplace conditions while also creating financial incentives for excellent teaching and practical sanctions for poor teaching.

To work well, this system requires crackerjack principals, education leaders who know how to judge good teaching and are prepared to act on the basis of such evaluations. Principals at charter schools and private schools can serve as models.

3) High Standards for Subject-Matter Mastery and Character

Until a complete accountability system is in place to ensure quality control, states will need to monitor certain minimal conditions for classroom entry. They should, for example, perform background checks for all candidates and should require prospective teachers to have a solid general education, preferably a bachelor's degree in an academic field. States should also ensure that all their new teachers are adequately grounded in the subjects they are expected to teach.

Subject mastery can be ensured in two ways: by requiring that teachers major in the subjects they will teach or by requiring them to pass challenging tests in those subjects. Neither approach is perfect. Requiring that teachers major in the subject in which they plan to teach may—ironically—serve to set the bar too low. (At some universities, for example, students can graduate as history majors without learning all the history we'd expect a high-school history teacher to have mastered.)

As for testing teachers in their subjects, this obviously hinges on the quality and rigor of the test. Until we are assured that subject matter tests are comprehensive and demanding enough, we may be more comfortable requiring both a college major in the subject to be taught and a subject test.

4) Multiple Pathways into the Classroom

States should de-emphasize traditional teacher education and instead open the profession to a larger pool of talented and well-educated candidates. Standard teacher preparation programs should not be so long or costly as to discourage able people from embarking upon them. And states should publish clear information about education schools and their graduates, information that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of individual programs. States should expand the pool of talented teaching candidates by allowing well-educated individuals who have not attended schools of education to teach, provided that they meet the minimum standards outlined above. This means access via "alternative" certification and special programs such as Teach for America and Troops to Teachers. States should also encourage accelerated preparation programs and should seek to attract talented teachers to their public schools by using financial incentives such as signing bonuses, scholarships, or loan forgiveness programs.

Now that we have explained the reasoning behind the ideal teacher quality policies, we will describe in the next section how we generated a report card based on these policy prescriptions.

Notes

1 National Center for Education Statistics, *Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, January 1999).

2 Richard Murnane, et al., *Who Will Teach? Policies that Matter* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

3 Teacher certification and teacher licensure are used interchangeably throughout this essay.

4 Richard Ingersoll, "The Problem of Underqualified Teachers in American Secondary Schools," *Educational Researcher* (March 1999).

5 Ruth Mitchell and Patte Barth, "How Teacher Licensing Tests Fall Short," *Thinking K-16* Vol. 3 Issue 1 (The Education Trust, Spring 1999).

6 Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, "New Challenges, A New Resolve: Moving American Education Into the 21st Century," Sixth Annual State of American Education Speech, Long Beach, California, February 16, 1999.

7 Rob Greenwald, Larry V. Hedges and Richard D. Laine, "The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement," *Review of Educational Research* (Fall 1996): 361-396.

8 Dan D. Goldhaber and Dominic J. Brewer, "When Should We Reward Degrees for Teachers?" *Phi Delta Kappan* (October 1998): 134-138.

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GRADING THE STATES

In this report card, we measure how good a job the states are doing of putting policies into place that will improve teacher quality. The policies fall into four categories: 1) holding schools, principals, and teachers accountable for results, 2) empowering schools to make personnel decisions, 3) ensuring that teachers know their subjects (but avoiding needless regulation), and 4) opening the teaching profession to talented candidates who have not attended schools of education. These are the four principles which were offered to guide state policymakers in the introduction to this volume, as well as in *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*. Under each principle, three or four policies are listed (letters A-D). Listed under each policy is a series of indicators that we have identified to gauge whether states are carrying out such policies.

Principles and Indicators

I. Accountability for Results: States should develop results-based accountability systems at the student, classroom and school levels. (25% of overall grade)

A. States should have a comprehensive, statewide accountability system for schools. (40% of Accountability for Results grade)

1. Indicator: State measures pupil achievement and issues school-specific report cards that include pupil achievement (or requires that districts issue such report cards).
2. Indicator: State identifies successful schools and offers them recognition and/or rewards (including financial rewards).
3. Indicator: State evaluates and rates its schools on the basis of their academic performance, or at minimum, identifies low performing schools.
4. Indicator: State has the authority to reconstitute—or otherwise make major changes in—failing schools.
5. Indicator: State exercises the authority to reconstitute—or otherwise make major changes in—failing schools.

B. States should utilize market forces to advance school-level accountability. (40% of Accountability for Results grade)

1. Indicator: State has open-enrollment public school choice.
2. Indicator: State has embraced other forms of school choice (publicly-funded vouchers or a strong charter school law).
3. Indicator: State has a significant population of students attending charter schools.

C. States should hold principals accountable for school performance. (15% of Accountability for Results grade)

1. Indicator: Successful public schools are eligible for additional funds from the state which can be distributed to the principal as a salary bonus.
2. Indicator: State can replace the principal of a failing school.

3. Indicator: State policy does not permit principals to have permanent tenure (either in the building or as principals).

4. Indicator: Principals are treated as management and not labor; they are not included in the teacher bargaining unit and do not have their own collective bargaining unit.

D. States should have means for determining the effectiveness of individual teachers and holding them accountable for their students' learning. (5% of Accountability for Results grade)

1. Indicator: State uses a student-achievement-based approach for evaluating or relicensing teachers.

II. Staffing Autonomy: States should empower school-level administrators with the authority to make personnel decisions. (25% of overall grade)

A. States should encourage the devolution of key decisions to school executives. (33% of Staffing Autonomy grade)

1. Indicator: State has passed enabling legislation to allow site-based management that includes personnel decisions (including hiring, firing, promotion, retention, and/or compensation) or issues waivers that allow personnel decisions to be devolved to schools.

2. Indicator: State has a strong charter school law that allows school operators flexibility in selecting, employing, compensating, and retaining teachers and other staff.

B. Tenure should not interfere with reform goals. (33% of Staffing Autonomy grade)

1. Indicator: Teachers in the state do not automatically have lifelong tenure on the basis of years of employment, degrees earned, or other formal credentials.

C. States should encourage differential pay. (33% of Staffing Autonomy grade)

1. Indicator: State has a system of financial bonuses for successful schools that the principal can use to reward outstanding teachers.

2. Indicator: State has a variable pay structure for teachers based on performance or marketplace conditions.

III. Subject Mastery: States should have quality control systems to ensure that teachers have mastered their subject matter and that they do no harm, but these systems should not involve excessive regulation. (25% of overall grade)

A. States should perform background checks for all teaching candidates. (10% of Subject Mastery grade)

1. Indicator: State performs background checks on candidates for teaching positions, which may include criminal background, credit ratings, and character references.

B. States should require that teachers have a solid general education. (20% of Subject Mastery grade)

1. Indicator: State requires that elementary school teachers major in an academic subject (or at least fulfill a liberal arts distribution requirement).

2. Indicator: State requires that secondary school teachers major in an academic subject (or at least fulfill a liberal arts distribution requirement).

C. States should ensure that teachers know the subjects they teach. (70% of Subject Mastery grade)

1. Indicator: State requires that all secondary teachers either pass a solid subject matter test or have majored in a specific subject area if they are to be certified in that subject.

2. Indicator: State has placed restrictions on out-of-field teaching.

3. Indicator: A high percentage of secondary school teachers in the state hold a degree in the subject they teach.

IV. Multiple Pathways: States should de-emphasize traditional teacher education and open the teaching profession to a larger pool of talented and well-educated people. (25% of overall grade)

A. Standard certification programs should not be overly long or costly. (20% of Multiple Pathways grade)

1. Indicator: State-approved certification programs require a limited number of courses in pedagogy.

B. States should publish consumer information about teacher preparation programs and their graduates, so that prospective students, employers, and the public can appraise the effectiveness of these programs. (20% of Multiple Pathways grade)

1. Indicator: Placement rate for graduates is made public.

2. Indicator: Percentage of graduates passing teacher tests is made public.

C. States should expand the pool of talented teaching candidates by allowing well-educated candidates who have not attended schools of education to teach. (50% of Multiple Pathways grade)

1. Indicator: State has programs that allow strong teaching candidates to bypass conventional teacher training.

D. States should use financial incentive programs to attract talented teachers to their public schools. (10% of Multiple Pathways grade)

1. Indicator: State has a scholarship or loan forgiveness program (or other financial incentive program) to attract talented teachers to its public schools.

Grading Scale for Report Card				
A 63% and up	B+ 57-59.99%	C+ 47-49.99%	D+ 37-39.99%	F below 30%
A- 60-62.99%	B 53-56.99%	C 43-46.99%	D 33-36.99%	
	B- 50-52.99%	C- 40-42.99%	D- 30-32.99%	

Grading scale is used to determine total grade as well as grade for each principle and policy. (See web site for a detailed explanation.)

National Report Card

State	Score	Grade
Alabama	12.48	F
Alaska	13.69	F
Arizona	25.04	C-
Arkansas	18.21	D-
California	34.04	B
Colorado	30.29	B-
Connecticut	24.89	C-
Delaware	26.48	C
District of Columbia	-	-
Florida	37.30	A-
Georgia	29.84	C+
Hawaii	13.15	F
Idaho	18.84	D-
Illinois	26.08	C
Indiana	17.39	F
Iowa	15.41	F
Kansas	9.69	F
Kentucky	30.58	B-
Louisiana	22.01	D
Maine	12.84	F
Maryland	27.29	C
Massachusetts	30.58	B-
Michigan	35.46	B+
Minnesota	25.80	C
Mississippi	24.76	C-
Missouri	26.64	C
Montana	4.41	F
Nebraska	13.88	F
Nevada	19.14	D-
New Hampshire	26.63	C
New Jersey	29.90	C+
New Mexico	28.33	C+
New York	31.54	B-
North Carolina	31.63	B-
North Dakota	14.06	F
Ohio	22.96	D+
Oklahoma	27.86	C
Oregon	-	-
Pennsylvania	29.84	C+
Rhode Island	19.68	D-
South Carolina	28.99	C+
South Dakota	11.54	F
Tennessee	20.64	D
Texas	41.13	A
Utah	26.11	C
Vermont	18.06	D-
Virginia	27.98	C
Washington	16.61	F
West Virginia	25.26	C-
Wisconsin	18.36	D-
Wyoming	17.83	F
U.S. Average	**23.29**	**D+**

State (by rank)	Score	Grade
Texas	41.13	A
Florida	37.30	A-
Michigan	35.46	B+
California	34.04	B
North Carolina	31.63	B-
New York	31.54	B-
Kentucky	30.58	B-
Massachusetts	30.58	B-
Colorado	30.29	B-
New Jersey	29.90	C+
Georgia	29.84	C+
Pennsylvania	29.84	C+
South Carolina	28.99	C+
New Mexico	28.33	C+
Virginia	27.98	C
Oklahoma	27.86	C
Maryland	27.29	C
Missouri	26.64	C
New Hampshire	26.63	C
Delaware	26.48	C
Utah	26.11	C
Illinois	26.08	C
Minnesota	25.80	C
West Virginia	25.26	C-
Arizona	25.04	C-
Connecticut	24.89	C-
Mississippi	24.76	C-
U.S. Average	**23.29**	**D+**
Ohio	22.96	D+
Louisiana	22.01	D
Tennessee	20.64	D
Rhode Island	19.68	D-
Nevada	19.14	D-
Idaho	18.84	D-
Wisconsin	18.36	D-
Arkansas	18.21	D-
Vermont	18.06	D-
Wyoming	17.83	F
Indiana	17.39	F
Washington	16.61	F
Iowa	15.41	F
North Dakota	14.06	F
Nebraska	13.88	F
Alaska	13.69	F
Hawaii	13.15	F
Maine	12.84	F
Alabama	12.44	F
South Dakota	11.54	F
Kansas	9.69	F
Montana	4.41	F
District of Columbia	-	-
Oregon	-	-

Maximum Score = 60

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National Report Card: By Category

State	Accountability for Results	Staffing Autonomy	Subject Mastery	Multiple Pathways	Total Grade
Alabama	D	F	F	D	F
Alaska	F	F	F	D	F
Arizona	B	D	B	F	C-
Arkansas	D	F	B	F	D-
California	A	F	A	A	B
Colorado	B	D	A	B	B-
Connecticut	C	F	A	C	C-
Delaware	A	F	C	C	C
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	A	C	A	B	A-
Georgia	C	F	A	A	C+
Hawaii	F	F	B	F	F
Idaho	D	F	A	F	D-
Illinois	C	F	A	C	C
Indiana	C	F	A	F	F
Iowa	F	F	A	F	F
Kansas	C	F	F	F	F
Kentucky	D	D	A	A	B-
Louisiana	A	F	B	F	D
Maine	F	F	A	F	F
Maryland	D	F	B	A	C
Massachusetts	C	D	A	B	B-
Michigan	B	F	A	A	B+
Minnesota	B	F	A	D	C
Mississippi	F	D	B	B	C-
Missouri	D	F	A	A	C
Montana	F	F	F	F	F
Nebraska	F	F	A	F	F
Nevada	B	F	B	F	D-
New Hampshire	F	D	A	A	C
New Jersey	C	F	A	A	C+
New Mexico	B	B	C	D	C+
New York	B	F	A	A	B-
North Carolina	A	F	C	B	B-
North Dakota	F	F	A	F	F
Ohio	C	F	B	D	D+
Oklahoma	A	D	B	C	C
Oregon	-	-	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	C	F	A	B	C+
Rhode Island	F	F	A	F	D-
South Carolina	B	C	A	D	C+
South Dakota	F	F	B	F	F
Tennessee	D	F	A	F	D
Texas	A	B	A	A	A
Utah	C	D	A	F	C
Vermont	F	F	A	F	D-
Virginia	D	F	A	A	C
Washington	F	F	F	A	F
West Virginia	D	F	C	A	C-
Wisconsin	B	F	A	F	D-
Wyoming	F	F	A	F	F
U.S. Average	C	F	B	D	D+

National Report Card: Detailed Grades

State	Accountability For Results					Staffing Autonomy			
	School-Level (40%)	Market-Based (40%)	Principals (15%)	Teachers (5%)	Total	School-Level Decisions (33%)	No Tenure Problem (33%)	Differential Pay (33%)	Total
Alabama	A	F	B	F	D	F	F	F	F
Alaska	F	B	D	F	F	F	F	B	F
Arizona	F	A	D	F	B	B	F	B	D
Arkansas	C	B	F	F	D	F	F	F	F
California	A	A	D	F	A	F	F	B	F
Colorado	F	A	D	F	B	B	F	B	D
Connecticut	D	A	D	F	C	F	F	F	F
Delaware	A	A	B	F	A	B	F	F	F
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	A	A	A	A	A	F	F	A	C
Georgia	C	D	A	F	C	F	F	B	F
Hawaii	C	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Idaho	F	A	D	F	D	F	F	F	F
Illinois	A	F	B	F	C	A	F	F	F
Indiana	A	F	D	F	C	F	F	F	F
Iowa	F	D	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Kansas	A	D	D	F	C	F	F	F	F
Kentucky	A	F	F	F	D	B	F	B	D
Louisiana	A	A	A	F	A	B	F	F	F
Maine	F	F	D	F	F	F	F	F	F
Maryland	A	F	D	F	D	F	F	B	F
Massachusetts	F	A	B	F	C	A	F	F	D
Michigan	D	A	A	F	B	A	F	F	F
Minnesota	D	A	F	F	B	F	F	F	F
Mississippi	F	D	A	F	F	F	A	F	D
Missouri	D	B	D	F	D	F	F	F	F
Montana	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Nebraska	F	D	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Nevada	A	D	D	F	B	F	F	F	F
New Hampshire	F	D	F	F	F	B	F	B	D
New Jersey	C	A	F	F	C	F	F	F	F
New Mexico	A	B	B	F	B	F	A	B	B
New York	A	B	D	F	B	F	F	F	F
North Carolina	A	A	A	B	A	F	F	B	F
North Dakota	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Ohio	C	A	F	F	C	B	F	F	F
Oklahoma	A	B	A	A	A	B	F	B	D
Oregon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	C	B	A	F	C	F	F	B	F
Rhode Island	D	F	B	F	F	B	F	F	F
South Carolina	A	D	A	F	B	A	F	B	C
South Dakota	F	D	D	F	F	F	F	F	F
Tennessee	D	D	D	A	D	F	F	B	F
Texas	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	B
Utah	F	A	A	F	C	B	F	B	D
Vermont	B	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Virginia	A	F	B	F	D	F	F	B	F
Washington	D	D	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
West Virginia	A	F	A	F	D	F	F	F	F
Wisconsin	D	A	F	F	B	F	F	F	F
Wyoming	F	F	B	F	F	F	F	F	F
U.S. Average	C	C	C	F	C	F	F	F	F

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NATIONAL REPORT CARD: DETAILED GRADES

	Subject Mastery				Multiple Pathways						
State	Background Checks (10%)	Liberal Arts Degrees (20%)	Subject Knowledge (70%)	Total	Streamlined Certification (20%)	Report Cards On Ed Schools (20%)	Alternative Certification (50%)	Financial Incentives (10%)	Total	Total Grade
Alabama	A	F	F	F	F	F	B	A	D	F
Alaska	A	F	F	F	F	F	B	A	D	F
Arizona	A	B	B	B	F	F	B	F	F	C-
Arkansas	A	F	A	B	F	F	B	F	F	D-
California	A	A	B	A	F	B	A	A	A	B
Colorado	A	A	B	A	F	F	A	F	B	B-
Connecticut	A	A	A	A	B	F	B	A	C	C-
Delaware	A	B	D	C	B	F	B	A	C	C
Dist. of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	A	A	B	A	F	A	B	A	B	A-
Georgia	A	A	A	A	F	B	A	A	A	C+
Hawaii	A	B	B	B	F	F	F	A	F	F
Idaho	A	A	B	A	F	F	B	F	F	D-
Illinois	A	B	A	A	B	F	B	F	C	C
Indiana	A	A	A	A	F	F	F	F	F	F
Iowa	F	A	A	A	B	F	F	A	F	F
Kansas	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	A	F	F
Kentucky	A	B	A	A	F	B	A	A	A	B-
Louisiana	A	B	B	B	F	F	F	A	F	D
Maine	A	A	B	A	A	F	F	F	F	F
Maryland	A	F	A	B	B	F	A	A	A	C
Massachusetts	F	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	B-
Michigan	A	A	A	A	A	F	A	A	A	B+
Minnesota	A	A	A	A	F	F	B	A	D	C
Mississippi	F	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	C-
Missouri	A	B	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	C
Montana	F	B	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Nebraska	F	A	A	A	F	F	F	F	F	F
Nevada	A	F	A	B	A	F	F	F	F	D-
New Hampshire	A	A	B	A	F	B	A	F	A	C
New Jersey	A	A	A	A	B	F	A	F	A	C+
New Mexico	A	A	D	C	F	B	B	F	D	C+
New York	A	A	A	A	F	B	A	F	A	B-
North Carolina	F	F	A	C	F	A	B	A	B	B-
North Dakota	A	A	A	A	F	F	F	F	F	F
Ohio	A	B	B	B	F	F	B	A	D	D+
Oklahoma	F	A	B	B	F	F	B	A	C	C
Oregon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	A	A	A	A	F	F	A	F	B	C+
Rhode Island	A	A	A	A	F	F	F	F	F	D-
South Carolina	A	A	B	A	F	F	B	A	D	C+
South Dakota	F	A	B	B	F	F	F	F	F	F
Tennessee	A	A	B	A	F	B	F	A	F	D
Texas	A	A	B	A	F	B	A	A	A	A
Utah	A	A	A	A	F	F	B	F	F	C
Vermont	A	A	A	A	F	F	B	F	F	D-
Virginia	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	A	A	C
Washington	A	F	F	F	F	F	A	A	A	F
West Virginia	A	F	B	C	B	A	A	A	A	C-
Wisconsin	A	B	A	A	F	F	F	F	F	D-
Wyoming	A	A	A	A	F	F	B	F	F	F
U.S. Average	A	A	B	B	F	C	B	F	D	D+

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD		
ALASKA		
Accountability	4.44	F
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	1.50	F
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	13.69	
Total Grade	**F**	

ALABAMA

Except for decent school-level accountability and a mediocre alternative certification program, Alabama's teacher-quality apparatus is badly broken. Alabama maintains a system in which school-level authority for hiring and firing of personnel is precarious, and the assurance that teachers know their content area is elusive. Both principals and teachers gain "continuing service status" after three years, making dismissals costly and difficult. Neither elementary nor secondary teachers must major in an academic subject, and teachers need not pass a subject-matter test in order to be certified. The state places no restrictions on out-of-field teaching. The state's new authority to identify and/or sanction failing schools is promising but not yet utilized. With only limited public school choice and no charter schools, school leaders face little pressure from market accountability.

REPORT CARD		
ALABAMA		
Accountability	5.73	D
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	1.50	F
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	12.48	
Total Grade	**F**	

ALASKA

Alaska's teacher-quality system exhibits an unfortunate combination: little systemic accountability, few basic requirements to ensure that teachers know their subjects, and significant hurdles to sound hiring and firing practices. Subject-matter exams are required by some teacher-prep programs, but not by the state itself. Nor does the state require academic content area majors or place real restrictions on teaching out-of-field. (State officials understandably note the difficulty of staffing Alaska's sparsely populated rural districts with fully credentialed instructors in every field.) It's odd, then, that no robust alternative certification programs are in operation to offer help. One such entry path exists, but it's the kind that requires the ultimate completion of an approved teacher education program. As a result, very few individuals have utilized this route. Tenure for principals and teachers can't help but make the situation worse.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

ARIZONA

If Arizona succeeds in devolving personnel decisions to the school level and trims its burdensome certification requirements, it will have a premier teacher-quality system. With statewide public school choice available, and 348 charter schools up and running this fall (26 percent of the state's schools, the largest percentage in the nation), Arizona principals have ample incentive to improve their schools. Its new academic standards for students, testing program, and sophisticated building-level data analysis also create the potential for effective accountability. Unfortunately, with teachers gaining tenure after three years in the classroom, and school boards in charge of hiring and firing, principals have little control over important personnel decisions. Academic content area majors are required only of secondary teachers. Fortunately, prospective teachers must pass new subject-matter exams in addition to a proficiency exam in reading, grammar, and mathematics. The state requires the completion of forty-five hours of professional-education coursework for elementary teachers (among the highest in the country) and thirty-five hours for secondary teachers. Arizona's newly expanded alternative certification program provides only moderate relief from these hurdles. It allows candidates to complete their training through a wider variety of institutions—including local school districts and charter schools. However, the state's bulky certification requirements remain more or less in place, even for the alternate routes.

REPORT CARD		
ARIZONA		
Accountability	8.04	B
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	8.25	B
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	25.04	
Total Grade	**C-**	

ARKANSAS

Arkansas's half-hearted attempt at school accountability and no-hearted attempt at devolving personnel decisions to the school level explain the state's disappointing "D Minus" average. Arkansas's new accountability system will require districts to publish school report cards, including data on student performance, and will allow the state both to reward successful schools and to take over failing districts. (The state will score somewhat higher on this measure once that system is operational.) Arkansas's newly improved charter-school law may also put pressure on public school principals to improve their schools. Teachers, however, face no new accountability. And the state allows principals to bargain collectively—which makes school-level accountability a farcical notion. Arkansas earns no points in the area of school-level autonomy, with both teachers and principals gaining due-process rights (akin to tenure) after a three-year probationary period. No performance-based pay structures are currently in place, according to state officials. Presently, neither elementary nor secondary teachers are required to have majored in an academic subject, although both must take content-area exams. Arkansas has an alternative certification program on the books, though it is not very good and has only produced a few hundred teachers in the last several years.

REPORT CARD		
ARKANSAS		
Accountability	5.96	D
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	8.50	B
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	18.21	
Total Grade	**D-**	

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

CALIFORNIA

REPORT CARD		
CALIFORNIA		
Accountability	10.04	A
Autonomy	3.75	F
Subject Mastery	9.75	A
Multiple Pathways	10.50	A
Total (out of 60)	34.04	
Total Grade	**B**	

Against the rising tide of an acute teacher shortage—caused by a popular but ill-conceived class-size reduction program and a ballooning student population—California is waging an heroic battle to boost the quality of its teaching force. The legislature this year approved a convoluted standards-based accountability system that will reward some successful schools and gently sanction some troubled ones (those that choose to accept help from the state). Rather than being held accountable for reaching these standards, however, teachers will be "evaluated" within a peer-review framework. Further removing key personnel decisions from school leaders, California teachers earn tenure after just three years. Principals, meanwhile, face growing pressure from the state's 234 charter schools, roughly 3 percent of the state's public-school crop. Teachers have been required since 1960 to have majored in an academic content area (secondary teachers in the area in which they want to be certified), but no subject-matter test is required of graduates of approved programs. The state's early reading initiative, however, has sparked a new requirement for the K-8 multi-subject credential: passage of a test in the teaching of reading. Finally, California operates a decent alternative certification program, the "District Intern program," which has produced nearly 2,000 newly certified teachers since 1994-95 (not a lot for so large a state).

COLORADO

REPORT CARD		
COLORADO		
Accountability	8.04	B
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	9.75	A
Multiple Pathways	7.50	B
Total (out of 60)	30.29	
Total Grade	**B-**	

Colorado is well on its way to an improved teacher force. A new standards-based accountability system for schools is starting to be implemented, and the state's strong public school choice and charter programs are putting pressure on school leaders to get results. As yet, however, local administrators have little control over personnel and teacher accountability is nonexistent. Although Colorado loses some points for continuing to mandate lots of pedagogy in its approved teacher training programs, the state does require that teachers major in an academic content area, not in education. While there are no restrictions on out-of-field teaching, a state-developed subject-matter exam is required of both elementary and secondary teachers. Colorado boasts a strong alternative certification program, though it has only graduated a few hundred students since 1994. Denver's innovative merit pay program will be watched closely in years to come.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

CONNECTICUT

REPORT CARD

CONNECTICUT

Accountability	6.64	C
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	11.50	A
Multiple Pathways	6.75	C
Total (out of 60)	24.89	
Total Grade	**C-**	

Connecticut is trying—and perhaps with some success—to boost teacher quality without reforming the public school system as a whole. The state gets kudos for shifting the emphasis in its teacher-prep programs from pedagogy to academic content knowledge. The average number of pedagogy requirements for elementary and secondary teachers combined is much lower than the national average. Since 1993, even elementary teachers have been prohibited from majoring in education, being required instead to major in an academic subject. The efficacy of a new portfolio assessment for teachers remains to be seen, but the state also requires subject-matter exams for certification. Connecticut has expanded its alternative certification program, which requires passage of the Praxis I and II and an eight-week intensive methods course. However, incentives for school improvement are still weak (Connecticut barely has an accountability system) but are slowly getting stronger, as local districts may award bonuses to principals for boosting student achievement. The state recently published a list of failing schools for the first time. Open enrollment and the state's handful of charter schools may also prod some struggling schools to get their acts together. But with strict tenure and collective bargaining, school leaders lack the authority to make needed personnel changes.

DELAWARE

REPORT CARD

DELAWARE

Accountability	10.73	A
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	6.50	C
Multiple Pathways	6.75	C
Total (out of 60)	26.48	
Total Grade	**C**	

With a few changes, Delaware could boast a first-rate teaching force. Its accountability system is solid—providing strong incentives for improvement by rewarding successful schools and threatening to reconstitute or shut down failing ones. Its statewide open-enrollment policy and relatively strong charter law also keep public school leaders on their toes. Unfortunately, those leaders do not have the authority to make important personnel decisions that would help them turn schools around. (The state is, however, now considering merit pay for teachers based on student achievement.) The state's few teacher regulations seem backwards: elementary teachers are required to major in education, while secondary teachers are not required to major in an academic subject. At the same time, the state requires no subject-matter exam—a worrisome combination that could easily be remedied. Delaware has proactively recruited talented individuals into teaching through a fairly streamlined traditional certification process, a decent—if under-utilized—alternative certification program, and financial incentives.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD		
STATE NAME		
Accountability	?	?
Autonomy	?	?
Subject Mastery	?	?
Multiple Pathways	?	?
Total (out of 60)	?	
Total Grade	**?**	

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District of Columbia declined to cooperate with this study.

REPORT CARD		
FLORIDA		
Accountability	13.80	A
Autonomy	6.25	C
Subject Mastery	9.00	A
Multiple Pathways	8.25	B
Total (out of 60)	37.30	
Total Grade	**A-**	

FLORIDA

Florida earns an "A-" for its bold teacher-quality system. The state's carefully crafted accountability system has all the crucial elements. Called the nation's first "money-back guarantee" in public education, the Florida system identifies continuously failing schools and offers their families the choice to attend another public, private, or charter school. Florida is the only state in our survey that requires districts to implement a performance-based pay schedule for teachers, and one of the few that mandates the consideration of student achievement in the evaluation of teachers. Although teachers may still be awarded tenure in Florida (the system's major weakness), principals may not be, nor are they permitted to bargain collectively. The equivalent of an academic major is required of secondary teachers and subject-matter tests are also mandated. The state officially has a new alternative certification program, though it is rather small and limited. Florida certainly needs a strong alternate route, because its traditional certification program is clogged with numerous required methods courses.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

GEORGIA

REPORT CARD		
GEORGIA		
Accountability	6.09	C
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	10.75	A
Multiple Pathways	10.50	A
Total (out of 60)	29.84	
Total Grade	**C+**	

Georgia is striving to upgrade its teaching force but remains hampered by a lukewarm accountability system and skimpy school-based decision-making. Its high standards for subject-matter mastery represent the strongest element of the system. While potential elementary teachers must major in education, they are also required to have twenty credit hours in reading and twenty hours in mathematics. And all teachers must pass a subject-matter exam. Last year, the Board of Regents also issued an innovative guarantee for new graduates of education schools, promising to retrain them if the schools in which they are placed say they aren't up to the task. Georgia makes a strong effort to recruit top-notch people into the field by offering financial incentives and expanding alternative certification programs. This includes programs that allow districts and "regional service agencies" to deliver tailored training to potential teachers who have passed the Praxis II subject-matter exam. (In the past, the state had required such candidates to affiliate with an education school.) Georgia rewards schools through its "Pay for Performance Program" and, although there is no public-school open enrollment, the state has thirty-two charter schools operating. These moderate incentives for school improvement are not accompanied by greater school authority, however. For example, teacher tenure may be awarded upon acceptance of the fourth consecutive contract.

HAWAII

REPORT CARD		
HAWAII		
Accountability	3.40	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	8.25	B
Multiple Pathways	1.50	F
Total (out of 60)	13.15	
Total Grade	**F**	

Hawaii's system unfortunately boasts lots of hoops and hurdles for prospective teachers, but no accountability for teachers once they're in the classroom. Hawaii has only recently published draft standards for students, and has only the most basic elements of an accountability program in place. The state's limited public school choice is unlikely to pressure failing schools to reform. Accountability is further hindered by the policy of awarding both teachers and principals tenure (teachers after two years and principals after a one-year probationary period). Perhaps it is just as well that Hawaii has not devolved power over personnel decisions to the school level. The state requires background checks and a subject-matter exam for future teachers, but also lots of professional-education coursework. There is no alternative certification program, though full tuition grants are available from the state in a few scarce fields.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

IDAHO

Accountability	4.84	D
Autonomy	1.25	F
Subject Mastery	9.00	A
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	18.84	
Total Grade	**D-**	

IDAHO

The only bright lights in Idaho's dim teacher-quality system are a decent public-school choice program and the requirement that secondary school teachers major in their subject area. With student standards still incomplete, however, and no systemic accountability program in place, pressure for schools to improve is slight. School leaders have virtually no power to hire or dismiss staff members. Idaho's alternative certification program is available only for secondary teachers and requires a significant amount of education coursework, as do the state's approved programs.

REPORT CARD

ILLINOIS

Accountability	6.33	C
Autonomy	3.75	F
Subject Mastery	10.00	A
Multiple Pathways	6.00	C
Total (out of 60)	26.08	
Total Grade	**C**	

ILLINOIS

While innovative reforms in Chicago should lead to an improved teaching force, most residents of Illinois have reason for concern. Only Chicago is home to a good alternative certification program and the only true systemic accountability and school choice in the state. The legacy of the 1988 school reform act continues to provide Chicago schools considerable authority over their personnel. Still, most school leaders in Illinois do not face much pressure to improve, nor—due to rigid teacher tenure—do they have the authority to hire or fire their own staff. On the positive side, distribution requirements exist for both elementary and secondary teachers, and both groups must pass a state-created subject-matter exam. Illinois is one of the few states that already had a policy of requiring that schools of education publish information about the success of their graduates (in advance of the provisions mandated by Congress in 1998). It scores high marks for requiring a minimal number of professional-education courses.

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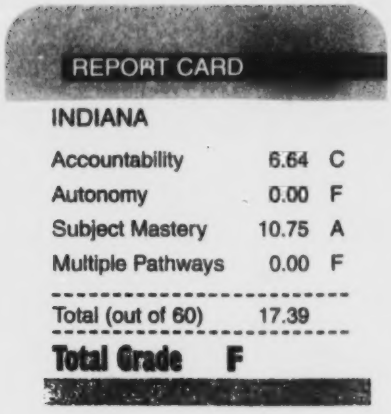
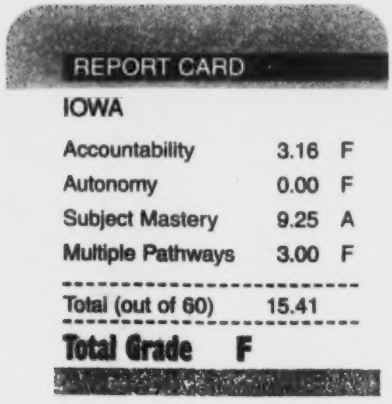
STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS



INDIANA

Except for a lukewarm (and determinist) school accountability system and a subject-matter exam, Indiana's teacher-quality system is a disgrace. On paper, the Hoosier State has developed a relatively good school-level accountability program, but in reality adults in the system face no real consequences. The state does nothing to expand the pool of teaching candidates (through alternative certification and the like) or to devolve personnel decisions to the school level. Tenure is granted to teachers when a sixth contract is issued, and principals may bargain collectively. Matters might get even worse if the state succeeds in its proposed revamping of teacher preparation, which would allow the colleges of education to design their own curricula, rather than have the state specify necessary content.



IOWA

Iowa's high student test scores cannot be attributed to its teacher-quality system. Except for some decent mandates related to subject mastery, the state has done little to improve its teaching force. Systemic accountability is negligible (perhaps not surprising in a state that has resisted the whole concept). Principals have little recourse with incompetent teachers—who are still awarded "continuing contracts" after a two-year probationary period. No alternative teacher certification programs exist. On the bright side, Iowa does not require an education degree of its elementary teachers, and does require them to take distribution courses in the humanities, math, and science. The state also requires secondary teachers to major in an academic content area, but imposes no subject-matter, or even basic-skills, exam on them. Iowa is also one of the few states that does not require a criminal background check of potential teachers. The legislature recently rejected proposals to adopt a merit-pay scheme for teachers, to revamp teacher preparation, and to require teacher testing.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

KANSAS

Accountability	6.44	C
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	1.75	F
Multiple Pathways	1.50	F
Total (out of 60)	9.69	
Total Grade	**F**	

KANSAS

Perhaps Kansas has been absorbed by its contentious evolution debate, because it has done little to boost the quality of its teaching force. Except for a middling accountability system that provides moderate incentives for schools to improve, the state fails on all fronts. No authority over personnel decisions has been devolved to the school level. Principals' hands are tied by teacher tenure, granted after just three years. Alternative certification is absent. In teacher preparation, Kansas is at the high end of requirements in professional-education coursework but requires no academic-subject majors or test. Like many states, Kansas has been reviewing and hoping to revise its teacher certification process. It certainly needs reform.

REPORT CARD

KENTUCKY

Accountability	5.08	D
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	10.00	A
Multiple Pathways	10.50	A
Total (out of 60)	30.58	
Total Grade	**B-**	

KENTUCKY

Kentucky does not suffer from lack of effort. With some of the toughest subject mastery requirements in the nation and a welcome openness towards alternative certification, it could easily lead the nation in teacher quality—if only its accountability system would include market mechanisms and if it would eliminate automatic teacher tenure. Kentucky has tried to implement a much-publicized results-based accountability system in which schools are rewarded for student gains on standards-based tests. But with teachers earning tenure after three years, and principals retaining "due process rights," accountability for adults is essentially nonexistent. Kentucky is one of the few states that has devolved some decision-making authority to the school-building level; many site-based councils in Kentucky have responsibility for hiring. (But again, with strict tenure laws, schools' hands are tied.) Kentucky scores well on subject mastery, requiring subject-matter exams for its teachers (with recently raised passing scores). It also requires academic content majors of secondary teachers, and humanities and sciences distribution requirements of its elementary teachers. A new portfolio mandate, combined with one of the highest number of required professional-education courses, means that Kentucky's hoops and hurdles are fairly bothersome. Thankfully, the state provides several alternative routes to this clunky traditional system, such as district-based certification, a program for college faculty who want to teach at the K-12 level, and the Troops to Teachers program.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

LOUISIANA

Accountability	9.01	A
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	8.25	B
Multiple Pathways	2.25	F
Total (out of 60)	22.01	

Total Grade D

LOUISIANA

Notwithstanding new efforts to hold its schools accountable and test its teachers, Louisiana's teacher-quality system is sorely inadequate. Once the state's accountability system is up and running, and once its strong charter school law bears more fruit, it will perform better on this rubric. Officials insist that most parishes empower school leaders with the authority to make personnel decisions. But teacher tenure, conferred at the district level, keeps school administrators from fully utilizing this authority. Although Louisiana does not require elementary teachers to major in education, it demands a higher-than-average number of professional-education courses. Disappointingly, secondary teachers are not required to have majored in an academic content area, either, though they must pass a subject-matter exam. There are currently no real alternative certification programs.

REPORT CARD

MAINE

Accountability	0.84	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	9.00	A
Multiple Pathways	3.00	F
Total (out of 60)	12.84	

Total Grade F

MAINE

Maine seems to believe in the adage that "less is more." It barely has an accountability system, and provides no options to parents. Thus, incentives for schools to improve are lacking. Perhaps this is just as well, for principals do not have authority to make personnel decisions. Maine even fails to require subject-matter exams for its prospective teachers, and only recently did the state decide to require background checks. On the positive side, elementary teachers need not major in education, and secondary teachers must major in their academic subject. Elementary teachers must also take a healthy dose, sixty semester hours, of liberal arts courses. Maine also boasts the lowest number of education-course requirements (four). Unfortunately, there is no real alternative certification program.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

MARYLAND

REPORT CARD

MARYLAND

Accountability	5.04	D
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	8.50	B
Multiple Pathways	11.25	A
Total (out of 60)	27.29	
Total Grade	**C**	

With a streamlined certification process and some decent alternative certification programs, Maryland is one of the friendliest states in the nation to would-be teachers. However, with meager accountability and very little school-level personnel authority, its teacher-quality system breaks down once they enter the classroom. Though the state has structured a challenging standards-based accountability system for students, no such accountability exists for teachers and principals. Nor is there any accountability to parents, who have no alternatives to their local school. Personnel decisions have in no way been devolved to the school level, as teachers are still awarded tenure by county boards and managed by the often-sprawling bureaucracies that work for those boards. Maryland is agnostic regarding majors for elementary or secondary teachers, but does require both basic-skills and subject-matter exams. The state has one of the lowest totals of professional-education courses needed for certification and scores high marks for expanding the pool of potential teachers by offering financial incentives (both scholarships and signing bonuses). It also allows local systems to run alternative certification programs. Maryland is currently piloting a merit-pay program for Baltimore teachers.

MASSACHUSETTS

REPORT CARD

MASSACHUSETTS

Accountability	7.33	C
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	10.0	A
Multiple Pathways	8.25	B
Total (out of 60)	30.58	
Total Grade	**B-**	

Massachusetts is clearly getting serious about teacher quality. But until teachers face real consequences for student learning, the state's aspirations to improve are apt to remain frustrated. Massachusetts last year began requiring new teachers to pass subject-matter competency tests and set strict cut scores. As the whole nation now knows, failure rates were high on the first administration, though subsequently higher passing rates may indicate that potential teachers and training programs are taking the tests seriously. The Bay State has implemented scholarships and juicy signing bonuses to attract potential teachers (who are no longer allowed to major in education) and has raised admission standards for state education colleges. Starting in 2000, if more than 20 percent of potential teachers fail the tests for two consecutive years, those colleges may be shut down. The Education Reform Act of 1993 did boost the authority of principals to make hiring and firing decisions, but teachers still receive tenure upon issuance of a fourth consecutive contract. Nor does the reform plan allow the state to reconstitute failing schools or reward successful ones. A decent alternative certification program is functioning, as is a solid charter school law, which has allowed for the operation of thirty-nine charter schools, over 2 percent of the state's current total. In Boston, at least, these schools are putting pressure on traditional public school principals to turn their ships around.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

MICHIGAN

Accountability	8.21	B
Autonomy	3.75	F
Subject Mastery	11.50	A
Multiple Pathways	12.00	A
Total (out of 60)	35.46	
Total Grade	**B+**	

MICHIGAN

Michigan earns an honors grade for its rigorous subject-matter requirements, strong incentives for schools to improve, streamlined teacher certification process, and welcoming alternate routes into the classroom. School principals are already under plenty of pressure to improve their schools; they can be replaced if test scores do not rise and the state's 175 charter schools (4.5 percent of the state's total public school crop) keep them on their toes, as does cross-district open enrollment. Yet strict teacher tenure still ties their hands. (Holding teachers accountable for student learning and rewarding them accordingly will not be easy politically, if Detroit's beginning-of-the-year teacher strike is an indication.) All teachers must major in an academic subject, and must take just a few education courses. Michigan requires a state-created subject-matter exam of secondary teachers, offers financial incentives to attract potential teachers, and operates a real alternative certification program for all grade levels.

REPORT CARD

MINNESOTA

Accountability	7.80	B
Autonomy	1.25	F
Subject Mastery	11.50	A
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	25.80	
Total Grade	**C**	

MINNESOTA

Minnesota has the makings of a decent teacher-quality system, though all of its elements could use a little more oomph. Systemic accountability for adults is essentially nil, though a strong charter law, the country's first statewide open-enrollment policy, and an innovative tax credit for education expenses do put some pressure on schools to improve. Teachers still receive tenure based on years of teaching (rather than performance), and even principals may bargain collectively as a matter of state policy. On the bright side, Minnesota requires the real equivalent of academic subject majors of both elementary and secondary teachers. A subject-matter exam is on the horizon but not yet in force. Unfortunately, Minnesota demands a higher-than-average number of education requirements in its approved training programs. The state earns credit for operating an alternative certification program for elementary teachers, though we understand that it is not well known—or well utilized.

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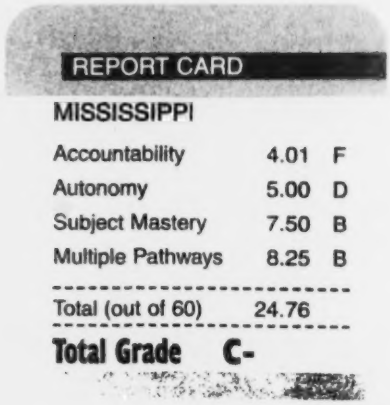
STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

MISSISSIPPI



REPORT CARD

MISSISSIPPI

Accountability	4.01	F
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	7.50	B
Multiple Pathways	8.25	B
Total (out of 60)	24.76	
Total Grade	**C-**	

If Mississippi officials would hold principals and teachers accountable for student learning, the state would have a decent teacher-quality system. Without tough consequences for failing schools, however, and without much competition from outside the traditional school system, incentives for adults to turn their schools around are weak. Still, Mississippi is one of the few states where collective bargaining and teacher tenure do not interfere with principals' hiring and firing authority (although local school boards retain the ultimate authority for personnel decisions). Plus, Mississippi requires that schools of education submit information about their graduates' success (and did so prior to the recent federal mandate) and uses this information to publish annual teacher-education performance reports. Elementary teachers, while required to major in education, must also have two areas of concentration in academic disciplines. Secondary teachers must major in an academic field and pass a subject-matter exam (Praxis II). The state requires little education coursework (only six requirements). Mississippi also operates at least one alternative certification program, which requires minimal education coursework, though it must be taken through an approved teacher education program.

MISSOURI

REPORT CARD

MISSOURI

Accountability	5.64	D
Autonomy	1.25	F
Subject Mastery	10.00	A
Multiple Pathways	9.75	A
Total (out of 60)	26.64	
Total Grade	**C**	

If Missouri were to get serious about holding teachers and principals accountable for student learning and devolving personnel decisions to the school level, it would have a strong teacher-quality system. As matters stand, the state receives low marks for accountability, with only the rudiments of a systemic plan, limited public school choice, and a charter school law that allows such institutions only in St. Louis and Kansas City. (There are, however, fourteen charter schools operating now—versus none last year.) The last tenure protection for principals (in St. Louis) was recently revoked and teacher tenure, which used to be awarded after three years, is now awarded with the sixth consecutive contract in a district. Principals still have their hands tied, though, due to teacher tenure and the lack of performance-based pay. Missouri last year began requiring the Praxis II subject-matter exam, rather than the NTE. Although it does require its teachers to major in education, the number of education requirements is happily low (eight), and a distribution of humanities, mathematics, and science courses is also required. Showing a willingness to hold its ed schools accountable, the state compiles and publishes "Teacher Preparation Institution Profiles." It has at least one alternative teacher certification program, although this applies only at the secondary level and is operated by approved teacher-preparation programs, i.e. mostly by ed schools.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

MONTANA

Accountability	1.16	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	3.25	F
Multiple Pathways	0.00	F
Total (out of 60)	4.41	
Total Grade	**F**	

MONTANA

Consistency is not always a virtue: Montana's teacher-quality system flunks on every count. Montana officials may be satisfied with the state's relatively high NAEP scores and other test results and feel no need to upgrade its teaching force. As a result, the state earns some of the lowest scores in all four categories, with almost no systemic (and certainly no marketplace) accountability, no evidence of devolving authority to the building level, scant attention to subject-matter expertise, and no apparent effort to expand the pool of potential teachers. (Officials explain that there is no teacher shortage in Montana.)

REPORT CARD

NEBRASKA

Accountability	2.88	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	11.00	A
Multiple Pathways	0.00	F
Total (out of 60)	13.88	
Total Grade	**F**	

NEBRASKA

It's good that Nebraska demands subject-matter mastery of its teachers, but the rest of its quality control system is all but nonexistent. Except for a school rating system to begin in 2000 and public-school open enrollment, there are no accountability provisions to give schools incentives to improve. Both principals and teachers are granted tenure as "certified education employees" and principals may bargain collectively. The state can boast no alternative certification programs and makes no effort to hold its schools of education accountable. On the bright side, elementary teachers are required to take forty semester hours of humanities, mathematics, and sciences courses. Secondary teachers must have the equivalent of an academic content-area major, but no subject-matter exams are required.

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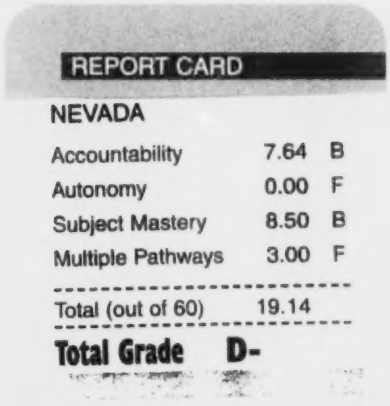
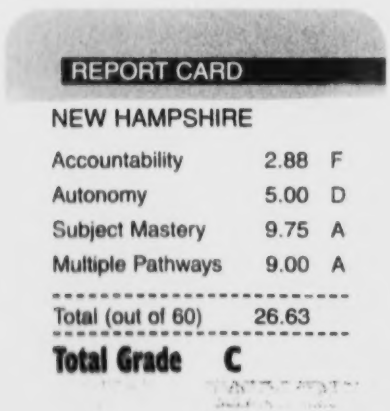


NEVADA

Perhaps because it is preoccupied with hiring enough teachers for its burgeoning student population and popular class-size reduction program, Nevada has done little to raise the quality of its teaching force. It might have been expected to allow alternative certification to ease the numbers crunch, but no such program exists. The state can boast a decent accountability system, though real consequences for failure have yet to be felt. Yet even as school leaders are under increased pressure to turn schools around, they have little authority to hire the teachers they need (or dismiss teachers who are not suitable). Teachers gain due-process rights after three years, and local school boards have ultimate hiring and firing authority. Nevada makes some effort to minimize out-of-field teaching, but does not require academic subject majors for its teachers or even distribution requirements in the humanities, mathematics, and sciences. The state does require a subject-matter exam.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire's teacher certification system contains lots of hoops and hurdles to discourage people from entering. Fortunately, these include mandates regarding subject-matter mastery. It is also fortunate that the state offers a decent alternative certification program to allow individuals to avoid its clunky traditional route. Unfortunately, the state does little else to develop high-quality teachers. Systemic accountability is mostly nonexistent, and school leaders have little authority over personnel decisions. Teachers and principals may bargain collectively and teachers earn tenure based on their number of years in the classroom. State officials report that teachers may be paid based on performance, but can cite just one district where this is done. On the bright side, New Hampshire requires important basics like subject-matter exams and distribution requirements in the humanities, arts, sciences, and social sciences. Elementary teachers need not major in education and secondary teachers must major in an academic subject. However, New Hampshire claims one of the highest numbers of professional-education requirements for both elementary and secondary teachers. The state can claim one small alternative teacher certification program, available at both elementary and secondary levels, but no financial incentives are offered to potential teachers.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

NEW JERSEY

Accountability	6.40	C
Autonomy	1.25	F
Subject Mastery	13.25	A
Multiple Pathways	9.00	A
Total (out of 60)	29.90	

Total Grade C+

New Jersey

New Jersey has made admirable strides toward a strong teaching force by raising subject-matter standards and implementing the country's first and largest alternative certification program. Still, the absence of accountability for teachers and principals limits the state's quality efforts. Except for some competition (from New Jersey's fairly strong charter program), principals face few incentives to turn their schools around. (It surely does not help that the state actually requires that principals be granted tenure.) Teacher tenure is also a matter of state law, awarded by districts solely on the basis of years of experience. Hiring and firing are the province of school boards, not principals. All this adds up to very little building-level authority over personnel decisions. Due to its strong alternative certification programs, however, New Jersey earns high marks for expanding its pool of qualified teachers. It also requires potential teachers to major in an academic subject and pass a subject-matter exam, imposes on them a minimal number of professional-education requirements, and claims to prohibit out-of-field teaching.

REPORT CARD

NEW MEXICO

Accountability	8.33	B
Autonomy	7.50	B
Subject Mastery	7.25	C
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	28.33	

Total Grade C+

New Mexico

New Mexico has the makings of the "reinventing education" model: its schools face moderate incentives to improve and in return have decent control over personnel policies (due to no teacher tenure). The state rates schools on student performance and retains the right to reconstitute or close failing ones (though it has not yet used this authority). There is statewide open enrollment and a weak charter law (that has produced only three schools); Governor Johnson's voucher program would have given public schools plenty of incentive to improve (but failed to clear the legislature). While the state does not require any specific majors of its elementary or secondary teachers, either in education or in academic disciplines, it does impose significant distribution requirements (fifty-four semester hours in specified liberal arts) and an average number of education requirements. Prospective teachers must pass state-created teaching-methods exams, and new subject-matter exams are under development. There are several alternative certification programs, but they are limited to collaborations among local school districts, institutions of higher education, and the State Department of Education.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

New York

REPORT CARD

NEW YORK

Accountability	8.04	B
Autonomy	1.25	F
Subject Mastery	13.25	A
Multiple Pathways	9.00	A
Total (out of 60)	31.54	
Total Grade	**B-**	

New York's recently revised teacher standards help offset the state's myriad regulations limiting principal authority and teacher accountability. (The Empire State is famously heavy-handed in its regulation of all aspects of education.) The new standards are themselves a mixed bag. On the good side, schools of education must produce graduates who can pass teacher-licensing exams (including basic-skills, subject-matter, and liberal arts and sciences tests) or face losing their licenses. New York requires a lot of professional-education coursework, but also requires that all potential teachers major in an academic subject. On the bad side, a proposal to have teachers evaluated more rigorously was not approved and a nominal revision of the teacher-evaluation process was put in place instead. Principals and teachers both are required to be given tenure (teachers after just three years of satisfactory service) and principals may bargain collectively (and in New York City they do so). This flies in the face of school accountability while rendering it impossible for school leaders to make important decisions about school personnel, even as the state's new charter school law begins to put some pressure on schools to improve. New York recently created an alternative certification program that appears promising.

North Carolina

REPORT CARD

NORTH CAROLINA

Accountability	12.63	A
Autonomy	3.75	F
Subject Mastery	7.00	C
Multiple Pathways	8.25	B
Total (out of 60)	31.63	
Total Grade	**B-**	

Someone forgot to tell North Carolina that greater accountability at the school level must be accompanied by greater authority over personnel decisions. With a full-blown (and much-praised) standards-based accountability system in place, statewide open enrollment and a good charter school law, North Carolina has effectively put pressure on school leaders to improve. Unfortunately, because of its strict teacher tenure and district-wide personnel practices, those leaders have little scope to develop their own staffs. At the same time, North Carolina fails to require background checks, academic majors, or subject-matter exams for its teachers. On the positive side, it has effectively opened the pool of applicants to more people via alternative certification and financial incentives. The state is also on the way to implementation of a comprehensive performance reporting system for its ed schools, which will help the public (and local school administrators) obtain good information about potential teachers. A new law requires that student performance be included in teacher evaluations, a phenomenon that is unfortunately rare (only three other states can say the same). Depending on the quality of the evaluation instruments (currently under development), North Carolina may come closer to providing principals the tools needed to get the results the state demands.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

NORTH DAKOTA

Accountability	1.56	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	12.50	A
Multiple Pathways	0.00	F
Total (out of 60)	14.06	
Total Grade	**F**	

NORTH DAKOTA

Individuals wanting to teach in North Dakota must clear lots of hoops and hurdles. Fortunately, these include getting a solid education in their subject areas. Once a teacher enters the North Dakota system, however, he/she is set for life, since accountability is nil and—thanks to continuing contracts after a single year—job security reigns supreme. With student standards still under revision, no systemic accountability and no market accountability except for limited open enrollment, North Dakota seems largely to have missed the standards-assessment-accountability train. (Even principals earn tenure.) Worse, the state has done nothing to devolve personnel decisions to the school level or widen entry into the profession. On the bright side, secondary teachers must have the equivalent of a content major and both they and elementary teachers must fulfill distribution requirements in general education, science, and math. Yet North Dakota, while mandating many professional-education courses, does not require a subject-matter exam of its potential teachers.

REPORT CARD

OHIO

Accountability	6.96	C
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	8.25	B
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	22.96	
Total Grade	**D+**	

OHIO

Ohio's teacher-quality system is schizophrenic. On one hand, the Buckeye State is trying to get serious about accountability and subject mastery. On the other hand, it remains enchanted with conventional teacher policies, like creating lots of hoops and hurdles for certification and giving school leaders no authority over personnel decisions. The most promising piece is its marketplace accountability—through a decent charter school law (forty-eight schools in this, the program's second year), the Cleveland Scholarship Program (now in judicial jeopardy), and limited open enrollment. Its standards-based system is weaker, with a focus on districts and no authority to close failing schools. Ohio scores few points for devolving personnel decisions to the school level, as teachers get continuing contracts and personnel decisions remain the province of superintendents and local boards. On the bright side, Ohio requires both background checks and subject-matter tests for its prospective teachers. Unfortunately, it also requires gobs of professional-education components. It is doubly sad, then, that Ohio has no alternative certification program worthy of the name.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

OKLAHOMA

Accountability	9.36	A
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	7.50	B
Multiple Pathways	6.00	C
Total (out of 60)	27.86	
Total Grade	**C**	

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma has the makings of a strong teacher-entry system, since it demands subject-matter mastery and school-level accountability. But until the state gets serious about giving schools greater authority over personnel decisions, teacher quality will lag. Oklahoma requires subject-matter tests and background checks for its teachers. But it also requires a whopping thirteen professional-education components (a.k.a. hoops and hurdles). Although elementary teachers must major in education, they are required to have subject-area concentrations and secondary teachers must major in academic disciplines. Oklahoma offers financial incentives (scholarships) to attract people to teaching, and an alternative certification program through which almost 2,000 teachers have been certified since 1994-95. However, that program is limited and fairly burdensome.

REPORT CARD

OREGON

Accountability	?	?
Autonomy	?	?
Subject Mastery	?	?
Multiple Pathways	?	?
Total (out of 60)	?	
Total Grade	**?**	

OREGON

Oregon declined to cooperate with this study.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

PENNSYLVANIA

REPORT CARD

PENNSYLVANIA

Accountability	7.09	C
Autonomy	3.75	F
Subject Mastery	10.75	A
Multiple Pathways	8.25	B
Total (out of 60)	29.84	
Total Grade	**C+**	

Thanks to several recent pieces of legislation and gubernatorial initiatives, Pennsylvania will soon boast one of the finest teacher-quality systems in the nation (and its grades will rise accordingly). It has made great progress in raising subject-mastery standards for its teachers. Secondary teachers will soon be required to complete the same core courses and required electives in their academic area that must be completed by students earning a BA or BS major in that academic area. Beefy distribution requirements in the arts, humanities, and social sciences will also be required of all teachers, elementary and secondary. At the same time, Pennsylvania has opened up its classrooms to talented people from other fields through a strong alternative certification program. (That program is under legal attack from the teachers colleges and unions.) Unfortunately, Pennsylvania also still requires numerous professional-education components in its approved teacher-prep programs and has made only minimal progress in devolving personnel decisions to the school level. Its accountability system gets a boost from the growing number of charter schools (up to forty-five from last year's thirty-one), though it would be much stronger if the state had the authority to reconstitute failing schools. Governor Ridge's proposed "Academic Emergency" plan certainly would have helped, but the legislature gave it a thumbs down.

RHODE ISLAND

REPORT CARD

RHODE ISLAND

Accountability	3.93	F
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	12.50	A
Multiple Pathways	0.75	F
Total (out of 60)	19.68	
Total Grade	**D-**	

While its neighbors energetically upgrade their teaching forces, Rhode Island seems to be running in place. It lacks almost every element of an effective accountability system, has made no effort to recruit talented people into teaching, and has not taken steps to hold its ed schools accountable. On the bright side, Rhode Island does demand training in one's academic subject (which seems to help reduce out-of-field teaching). State officials claim that principals retain hiring and firing authority, but it appears that local school boards have final say. Strict teacher tenure ties school leaders' hands tighter still.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

SOUTH CAROLINA

Accountability	8.49	B
Autonomy	6.25	C
Subject Mastery	9.00	A
Multiple Pathways	5.25	D
Total (out of 60)	28.99	
Total Grade	**C+**	

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina has the potential for a topnotch teacher-quality system. It will soon boast all the elements of systemic accountability, which is some consolation for its not-so-great market-based accountability. The state does have a relatively strong charter law, but it has been beset by litigation and has resulted so far in only ten schools. Nonetheless, school leaders face real incentives to turn their schools around and make good hiring decisions, though they do not have much authority to do so, due to strict teacher tenure. Prospective teachers must demonstrate subject mastery via exams. Elementary teachers are still required to major in education, though some liberal arts courses are also mandated. South Carolina has an alternative teacher certification program that has not produced many new teachers, but it does offer some scholarship and loan forgiveness programs for potential teachers.

REPORT CARD

SOUTH DAKOTA

Accountability	4.04	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	7.50	B
Multiple Pathways	0.00	F
Total (out of 60)	11.54	
Total Grade	**F**	

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota has made only the most minimal effort to boost the quality of its teaching force. The state has done little to hold schools accountable for student learning (except for publishing information on schools and implementing a statewide open-enrollment policy), to devolve personnel decisions, or to open up entry into the teaching field. South Dakota does demand that its teachers study their subjects in college (though elementary teachers must major in education). Yet several common sense regulations are missing: the criminal background check and the requirement to pass a subject-matter test.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

TENNESSEE

REPORT CARD

TENNESSEE

Accountability	5.39	D
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	9.75	A
Multiple Pathways	3.00	F
Total (out of 60)	20.64	
Total Grade	**D**	

The Tennessee system does one thing well: ensuring that prospective teachers know their subjects. Otherwise, the Volunteer State disappoints. Its accountability system lacks teeth, namely the threat of reconstitution and competition through school choice. No alternative certification program exists. On the bright side, Tennessee earns high marks for teacher standards: background checks are required, as are academic majors and subject-matter tests for all potential teachers. Still, many professional-education course components continue to be required in the approved teacher-preparation programs. Tennessee is one of the few states that considers student performance in the evaluation of its teachers—the state's testing system is well suited to this—and rewards are distributed to schools that meet performance goals, which include gains on achievement tests. Yet no consequences for individual teachers are attached to their students' performance. State officials say that many districts allow initial hiring decisions to be made by principals, although by law the superintendent has final say. This attempt to devolve personnel decisions to the school level is marred, however, by strict teacher tenure, which is awarded in Tennessee upon acceptance of the fourth consecutive contract.

TEXAS

REPORT CARD

TEXAS

Accountability	12.88	A
Autonomy	8.75	B
Subject Mastery	9.00	A
Multiple Pathways	10.50	A
Total (out of 60)	41.13	
Total Grade	**A**	

Texas earns top honors for its state-of-the-art teacher-quality system. Its backbone is the state's comprehensive, standards-based accountability system for students and schools. Texas officials have figured out how to hold schools accountable for results and devolve important personnel decisions to the school level. Texas is also one of the few states where student achievement is considered in the evaluation of teachers. A strong alternative certification program is in place not just to address shortages, but also to recruit talented people from other fields. Yearlong paid internships offer interested candidates the chance to complete tailored programs (including both content and pedagogy) offered through the collaborative efforts of districts, education service centers, and institutions of higher education. The state has issued over 19,000 alternative certificates since 1995, and its program is a model for other states. This path is especially useful since the state's traditional certification program still contains an onerous number of mandatory methods courses, though it also requires passage of subject-matter tests by both elementary and secondary teachers. Texas's greatest weakness is its vexing out-of-field teaching rate—some 49 percent.

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STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

UTAH

Accountability	6.61	C
Autonomy	5.00	D
Subject Mastery	10.75	A
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	26.11	

Total Grade C

UTAH

Utah demonstrates a willingness to boost the quality of its teaching force, but is missing some crucial components. Bright spots include its public-school choice program, which puts pressure on schools to improve, and strong subject-mastery requirements. The state's accountability system provides for rewards for schools, some of which may be used for teacher bonuses, and most of the regulatory requirements are compatible with an emphasis on academics, but for one big exception: no subject-matter exam is required. (Officials say that a new law gives the state board of education the right to require this.) Elementary teachers are still required to major in education, though distribution requirements in arts and sciences also exist. Utah is at the high end of the quantity of education coursework required within approved programs, adding to the hoops and hurdles facing prospective teachers. The state does not have the power to reconstitute failing schools, nor does it make much effort to put school leaders in charge of personnel decisions.

REPORT CARD

VERMONT

Accountability	3.56	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	10.75	A
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	18.06	

Total Grade D-

VERMONT

A few subject-mastery requirements aren't enough to compensate for Vermont's listlessness on the teacher-quality front. With no school choice, a middling standards-based accountability system, absolutely no effort to devolve personnel decisions to the school level, and a weak alternative certification program, Vermont officials either disagree with the "common-sense" teacher-quality strategy or choose to ignore it. The state's few redeeming policies: it requires background checks, expects academic majors of secondary teachers, and discourages out-of-field teaching.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

VIRGINIA

Accountability	5.73	D
Autonomy	2.50	F
Subject Mastery	10.00	A
Multiple Pathways	9.75	A
Total (out of 60)	27.98	
Total Grade		**C**

VIRGINIA

Virginia's average grade understates its recent progress towards a high-quality teaching force. Once the state's standards-based accountability system starts yielding consequences, the Old Dominion will score much better. A stronger charter school law would also help. Even so, the state has done virtually nothing to empower school leaders with the authority to make important personnel decisions. (Teacher tenure is a major obstacle in this area.) On the plus side, Virginia has strengthened its standards for teachers, who must major in an academic content area and pass subject-matter exams. Financial incentives are offered for potential teachers and Virginia is in the process of implementing a Texas-style alternative teacher certification program that will significantly expand the pool of potential teachers.

REPORT CARD

WASHINGTON

Accountability	4.36	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	3.25	F
Multiple Pathways	9.00	A
Total (out of 60)	16.61	
Total Grade		**F**

WASHINGTON

While Washington is energetically raising standards for its students, it is doing almost nothing to boost the quality of those who teach them. Its problems start with a weak accountability system; failing schools need not fear getting shut down (the state has no such authority) nor must they fear competition from charter schools (the legislature has refused to pass such a law). Nothing has been done to devolve important personnel decisions to the school level. (Teacher tenure makes effective school-based personnel management even more elusive.) Washington requires lots of education coursework (though no subject-matter tests) and makes public no information about teacher education programs. Its one bright spot is the "multiple pathways" category: Washington boasts a strong alternative certification program—on the books at least—and loan forgiveness for math and science teachers.

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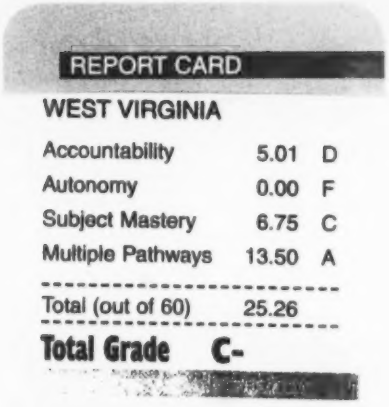
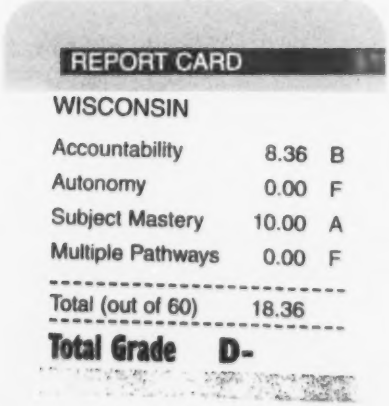


WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia's few efforts to upgrade its teaching force are marred by an unaccountable school system in general. While the state has published standards for student learning, it issues few rewards or sanctions for teachers or principals. That, plus the absence of any school choice, means that few extrinsic rewards exist for schools to turn themselves around. Tenure for teachers would make it tough for principals to hire staff effectively even if they were given the authority to do so (which they are not). On the bright side, West Virginia appears to have designed a real alternative route to certification (though few districts and schools have taken advantage of it). The state requires fewer education courses than average, but academic majors are demanded of neither elementary nor secondary teachers. Distribution requirements don't exist, either. Fortunately, subject-matter tests do, as well as background checks.



WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's enthusiastic use of marketplace accountability, particularly in Milwaukee, and its decent subject-mastery requirements for teachers, do not make up for a weak-kneed teacher-quality system. Various forms of school choice put pressure on school leaders to improve. Yet the state's systemic-accountability program is uneven, especially since it does not give the state the authority to shut down failing schools. The legislature recently caused even more problems by rejecting Governor Thompson's testing program. Those principals who want to shake up the status quo will find it difficult, as no authority over personnel decisions has been devolved to their level and teacher tenure reigns supreme. Wisconsin's teacher certification hoops and hurdles are inconsistent: it does require background checks, and academic subject majors of secondary teachers, but elementary teachers must major in education (as well as meeting distribution requirements). Even high-school teachers must take lots of professional-education coursework. Wisconsin does not yet require subject-matter tests of teachers, though the state is one of the few that insists it prohibits all out-of-field teaching. No real alternative certification program exists.

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

REPORT CARD

WYOMING

Accountability	3.33	F
Autonomy	0.00	F
Subject Mastery	10.75	A
Multiple Pathways	3.75	F
Total (out of 60)	17.83	
Total Grade	**F**	

WYOMING

Wyoming's mediocre teacher-entry system does not begin to overcome the state's lack of school accountability. Without any threat of closure, nor much competition from school choice, failing schools in Wyoming have scant incentive to turn themselves around. Were principals granted the proper authority for personnel decisions and held accountable for them, tenure for teachers could make such authority irrelevant. The state's highest marks are for requiring subject mastery of its teachers, though it's still missing such essentials as a subject-matter exam. Elementary teachers must major in education, though state officials say that a "core of courses" is required as well. It is unclear whether this adds up to real distribution requirements in the arts, humanities, and sciences. Wyoming has a weak alternative certification program on the books but otherwise makes no effort to recruit talented people into teaching.

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CONCLUSIONS

Findings

Taken as a group, the states earn distressingly low marks for their efforts to date to boost teacher quality, as judged by our criteria. Though nine deserve "honors" grades, eighteen earn C's, nine get D's and thirteen fail altogether.

What's more, this report card presents somewhat inflated grades. We did not, for example, penalize states for implementing reforms that we disagree with, such as requiring schools of education to be accredited by NCATE or selecting the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as the route to differential pay for teachers. (Differential pay is important, but in our view it should be based on actual teacher effectiveness and marketplace conditions, neither of which is considered by NPBTS.) Data constraints also fed grade inflation on specific indicators. For instance, forty states got full credit for saying they require a subject-matter test—or subject-specific college major—for new secondary teachers. Yet we know from the Education Trust's recent study that most states' teacher exams are ridiculously easy or have very low cutoff scores. Regrettably, we did not have a way of scoring the quality of individual state tests—and Education Trust's data did not lend themselves to this use.

Despite the inflation, four-fifths of the states don't now do well in developing and installing policies geared to boosting teacher quality according to our criteria. Which means that American parents across most of the country cannot be confident that the quality of their children's teachers will improve any time soon.

> The states earn distressingly low marks for their efforts to date to boost teacher quality.

What's the problem? Two explanations seem likeliest: either many states are having difficulty implementing a "common-sense" teacher quality strategy, or most are intentionally heading in another direction. We sense some of both.

Let's take a closer look at how the states as a group are performing on each of our four major categories. We'll go from best to worst.

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Subject Mastery: B

The states' relatively strong performance in subject mastery can partly be explained by grade inflation, as noted above. But not entirely. Many states are, in fact, raising the bar. In most, secondary teachers must pass a subject-matter exam or major in a subject in order to teach it. Unfortunately, only eleven states require that their elementary school teachers major in a real academic subject. Out-of-field teaching remains widespread—just six states claim to have outlawed it altogether—though many jurisdictions say they are taking steps to discourage it.

Subject Mastery: An Overview

- Thirty-nine states require background checks of teachers.
- Eleven states require that elementary teachers major in an academic subject.
- Thirty-five states require that secondary school teachers major in an academic subject.
- Forty states require that secondary school teachers pass a subject-matter test in a major in their subject, in order to be certified.
- Six states prohibit out of field teaching.

Remarkably, ten states do not insist on background checks of their teachers. We're no fans of "hoops and hurdles" blocking the entry path for teachers, but states should surely take pains to minimize the chances that people working in their schools will endanger children!

Several states serve as models in this area. Connecticut's efforts at raising academic standards for teachers are well known and widely hailed. It has aligned its certification requirements with its student academic standards and now requires an academic major for both primary and secondary school teachers. It has greatly reduced the number of required methods courses. Pennsylvania is also emerging as a leader in this area and, when recently announced reforms gain traction, may well turn out to have the strongest policies of any state. Soon, secondary teachers in the Keystone State will be required to complete the same courses in their academic area as students earning a BA or BS with a major in that subject. Beefy distribution requirements in the arts, humanities, and social sciences will also be required of all teachers, elementary and secondary.

Accountability for Results: C

Most states have jumped aboard the standards-and-accountability train. At least they say they have. On closer inspection, few jurisdictions yet have real consequences—positive or negative—for schools and the adults who work in them, consequences tied to how well and how much the children in those schools actually learn (i.e. how much value is added to their cognitive treasury).

Accountability for Results: An Overview

- Six states provide additional funds to successful schools and allow them to be distributed to principals as a salary bonus.
- Five states actually exercise the authority to reconstitute—or otherwise make major changes in—failing schools.
- Twenty-eight states do not permit principals to have permanent tenure.
- Four states use a student-achievement-based approach for evaluating or relicensing teachers.
- Fifteen states have strong charter school laws.

Accountability is key to the "common-sense " strategy for boosting teacher quality, for it assumes that school leaders will face strong incentives to make good decisions about how to run effective schools—decisions that include recruiting, hiring, and firing staff. Accountability means real rewards and punishments. Yet only six states provide bonuses to schools that can be used to reward successful principals, and only five have

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exercised their authority to shut down or reorganize failing schools.

Twenty-eight states do not allow principals to earn tenure, so, at least in theory, state or local officials in those jurisdictions could put principals' jobs on the line. The growing school choice movement is also beginning to put pressure on some school leaders via the marketplace. High charter school enrollments in cities like Washington, Detroit, Houston, and Dayton are putting principals in the hot seat—and strong charter laws in fifteen states should keep this form of accountability-via-competition strong.

North Carolina does a good job with accountability. It has a thorough school-based accountability system, a lot of market-based accountability through charter schools (though not statewide open enrollment), real consequences for principals (including bonuses and threats of school reconstitution), and is developing a teacher evaluation model that weighs student achievement.

Multiple Pathways: D

Are states actively recruiting talented individuals from non-traditional backgrounds to join the ranks of public school teachers? Are they significantly reducing the hoops and hurdles that drive so many would-be public school teachers into other lines of work? The answer: not really. Fourteen states have serious alternative certification programs but just a few of these have produced sizable numbers of graduates. Traditional certification requirements remain bloated with methods courses. About half the states do offer financial incentives—scholarships, loan forgiveness, or signing bonuses—for promising teachers, though the scope and quality of these programs varies widely. There is one bit of good news, but it results from a new federal requirement, not from state initiative: under the recently amended Higher Education Act, every state must soon collect and publish information on its teacher training institutions' passing rates on teacher tests.

Multiple Pathways: An Overview

- Fourteen states compile and disseminate information about the passing rates of graduates of teacher training programs
- Fourteen states have strong alternative certification programs
- Twenty-seven states have scholarship or loan forgiveness programs to attract talented college graduates into public school teaching

West Virginia leads the pack in this category because it has kept its ed school course requirements within bounds, produces performance reports on its teacher training programs, and has—on the books, anyway—a decent alternative certification program. To see topnotch alternative certification programs in action, visit Texas, California, or New Jersey. Maine has most successfully reduced the hoops and hurdles of required methods classes.

Staffing Autonomy: F

If there were a grade below "F," most states would deserve it, due to their failure to devolve key personnel decisions to the school level. On this front, most states are way, way behind where they should be. Thirty-seven of them flunk on our scale. Teacher tenure (or its equivalent) reigns supreme almost everywhere.

Staffing Autonomy: An Overview

- Eight states have devolved personnel decisions to the school level through legislation or waivers
- Two states do not permit automatic tenure to be granted to teachers based on years of service and/or credentials
- Twelve states have a variable pay structure for teachers based on performance or marketplace conditions

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Variable pay structures—allowing for merit-based pay or higher salaries for hard-to-staff positions—can be found in just twelve jurisdictions.

Model states don't exist, but Massachusetts has successfully devolved some staffing authority to the school level—in both traditional and charter schools. Mississippi and New Mexico have eased their tenure laws. Texas infrequently grants "continuing contracts." Florida, however, appears to be the only jurisdiction that expects all its local districts to implement performance-based pay. (To that end, however, it relies more heavily on the NBPTS than we think advisable.)

Four Conclusions

I. Accountability for Results Is More Talk than Action

Standards-based reform and school accountability are in vogue. Just weeks ago, the state governors convened at the third National Education Summit to rededicate themselves to "systemic reform" based on standards and accountability. Yet few adults in American public schools are truly accountable for their results today, if by accountability we mean tangible rewards for success and palpable penalties for failure. Save in a few states, measurable performance does not yet make much difference in the lives of the grownups who run and staff our schools. Very few failed schools have been reconstituted. Bonuses for principals have not materialized. Marketplace accountability remains spotty. And almost nobody has tied teacher reviews to the value that they add to their pupils' learning.

Almost nobody has tied teacher reviews to the value that they add to their pupils' learning.

Why is real accountability so hard to put in place? First, it is easier to mete out rewards and punishments to students than to teachers. That's why we are likelier to see states ending social promotion or blocking graduation than eliminating teacher tenure. Children, after all, don't have interest groups working on their behalf. States can thus "talk tough" about accountability when really they've only implemented student-based measures. Second, the public school establishment's many vested interests have fought real accountability tooth and nail. It's not just the teachers' unions. New York City principals have in the past turned down major pay raises because they were more interested in clinging to permanent tenure. Practically the same thing happened recently in Alexandria, Virginia, where principals rejected performance-based bonuses. At the end of the day, no one wants to be held accountable if that means taking genuine risks or facing real rewards and punishments. And the adult interest groups are powerful enough that they can turn this reluctance into successful blocking-and-tackling actions in state capitals. Third, some states still cling to the old-fashioned view that accountability means regulating inputs and procedures. They have plenty of rules saying "do this" and "don't do that." But they haven't made achievement count.

II: School-Level Autonomy: The Unfulfilled Promise

Standards-based reform is based on a "grand bargain," what Lamar Alexander, when he was chairman of the National Governors' Association in the mid-1980s, called "a little old-fashioned horse-trading." States would set academic standards and hold schools accountable for meeting them. In return, schools would gain a great deal of freedom to attain those standards in the ways

they judged best. That's how it works in the charter school world. But it hasn't worked out that way for many public schools. Yes, in states with tough accountability systems and/or well-functioning market mechanisms, principals are under intensifying pressure to perform. But in most places their hands are still tied; they have little or no control over crucial elements of their enterprise: budget, curriculum, and, most importantly, staff.

Imagine trying to run a successful school and not being able to choose its teachers. Imagine trying to turn around a failing school and not being able to remove an incompetent instructor. Imagine being personally accountable for performance but not being able to demand the same from others in your organization. If standards-based reform is to succeed, school leaders need the "freedom of action" (Paul Hill's words) to get the job done. States have failed dismally to empower school leaders with the tools they need.

Imagine trying to run a successful school and not being able to choose its teachers.

The common-sense strategy for boosting teacher quality rests on the premise that school leaders should have strong incentives to perform AND should be empowered with the authority to make important decisions—especially about staffing. Most states have failed on the first count. Almost all states have failed on the second.

III: In the World of Certification, It's Easier to Add than Subtract

Many states are trying to get serious about teacher quality. For most, however, that means piling on more requirements for licensure or certification. The good news is that some of these new hurdles relate to content knowledge. Most states, for example, require subject-matter tests or majors. A few—like Massachusetts—are developing tough teacher tests keyed to the state's student academic standards.

The bad news is that many states are also bulking up their pedagogy requirements. Few have streamlined their certification process. Many are moving in the direction of California, which now requires a five-year teacher preparation program. The result will be fewer people making it through the regulatory maze into their state's public school classrooms—and because the new requirements focus on factors that have little bearing on actual teacher effectiveness, those who do make it through are no more likely to be competent. Just as troubling, fewer of America's best and brightest will be able to try teaching in our public schools. The opportunity costs are getting too high. The abler the person, the more options he or she has. The loftier the barriers to public school teaching (in terms of the time and money needed to complete a training program), the more likely a candidate will choose another line of work or, perhaps, teach in private or charter schools.

Yet adding requirements seems to be the typical policy response by states to the need for improved teacher quality. Far better, we think, to subtract. A proven way to attract able people into public schools—both recent college graduates who know their subjects but whose transcripts are not awash in pedagogy courses, and mid-career people interested in trying teaching—is to create strong alternate route programs with very few pedagogy requirements. Yet only a handful of states have done this with gusto. A second, more comprehensive, option is to shrink the

requirements for "conventional" certification down to the elements that really matter: subject-matter knowledge and a background check. But the states have not had the discipline—or political will—to make this happen. Addition, for them, appears far easier than subtraction.

IV: Symbolic Change is no Substitute for Systemic Change

States do well on indicators that relate to smallish, "innovative" programs, pilots and demonstrations. Most have enacted charter school legislation—but have kept the numbers of such schools small. One-third boast alternative certification programs—but in most jurisdictions these yield a minuscule number of teachers (often because they can be used only in "shortage" situations). Several provide bonuses for new teachers—but in most states the size of such programs (and of the bonuses) is small. States have found it politically possible to introduce experiments and pilots, sometimes to enact tightly restricted reforms. But when it comes to implementing big changes—the kind that change the basic ground rules and rattle established interests—they either have not tried very hard or have been defeated by the united armies of the status quo.

> Adding requirements seems to be the typical policy response by states to the need for improved teacher quality.

Does a governor want to hold his state's ed schools accountable for producing effective teachers or to break up the training monopoly by allowing other routes into the classroom? Good luck. Does a legislative leader hope to reform tenure so that weak teachers can actually be dismissed, rather than transferred to a school with a less persnickety principal? Yeah, right. How about creating a bold education marketplace through large numbers of charter schools—or even vouchers? Keep dreaming. The fact is, notwithstanding much palaver about solving the teacher problem (and about school reform in general), states have mainly done the easy work and fallen down on the hard. Until policymakers are able to outmaneuver or overwhelm the forces that strive to keep things the way they are, they will not produce real change in their schools or in the realm of teacher quality.

The Road Ahead: Two Possible Paths

In this report, in the manifesto *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, and in the research volume *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, we have promoted a common-sense strategy for boosting teacher quality. This approach tries to get the incentives right at the school level through standards-based accountability and marketplace dynamics. It devolves personnel decisions to fully accountable school leaders. It sets high standards for teachers' subject mastery. And it welcomes talented individuals into the classroom through multiple pathways.

Another path to teacher quality has also been outlined, most clearly by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF). This strategy does not assume any transformation of the education system as a whole, but it does seek key policy changes in teacher recruitment and certification. It is, at heart, a centralized, command-and-control strategy. States that embrace it will tighten licensure requirements, accredit (and standardize) their

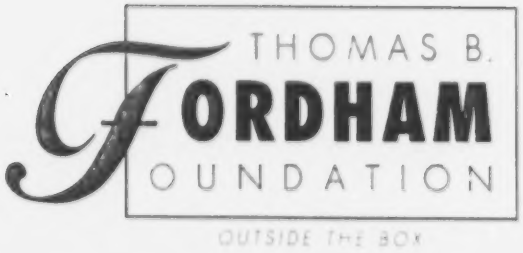
teacher training programs, and close loopholes that allow individuals without officially sanctioned training to become teachers. Adherents of this strategy have misgivings about the wisdom and executive prowess of school leaders, and hence limit their choices about whom to hire.

States that embrace the command-and-control approach may supplement it with sound, non-regulatory policies. Some may boost teacher salaries in hopes of provoking a response in the teacher labor market. Others may offer more on-the-job training in the form of induction programs or mentoring for new teachers. Those are good ideas that we applaud; indeed, they are almost beyond dispute. They conflict with neither the common-sense approach we recommend nor the regulatory approach embraced by NCTAF. But raising salaries and offering on-the-job training will not in themselves boost teacher quality, which is why states that are serious about reform need to take bolder action. Unfortunately, if they select the hyper-regulatory approach urged by NCTAF, they may be doomed to failure.

It's dysfunctional for key state education policies to work at cross-purposes.

There are three acute problems with the regulatory approach. First, as shown in *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, research evidence that such policies work is simply lacking. Second, such a centralized, authoritarian, top-down approach contradicts every other modern attempt to reform troubled organizations. Today, almost every private or public sector organization, every business, every government agency is working to deregulate and decentralize itself. Most are focusing on results and freeing those "on the line" to innovate with respect to processes and solutions. But the NCTAF strategy moves in the opposite direction, by centralizing power, standardizing how things are done, relying more heavily on "experts," and maintaining supplier monopolies.

Third, this strategy is inconsistent—conceptually and pragmatically—with today's premier school reform strategy, a "tight-loose" strategy for transforming our public schools: tight as to the results—especially the academic achievement—that the state demands, loose as to the means by which schools produce those results. Most governors and business leaders support this strategy for attaining school quality. Yet many of these same leaders are promoting the opposite approach to teacher quality. It's not just irrational. It's dysfunctional for key state education policies to work at cross-purposes: holding schools accountable for results without conferring on them the authority to make important decisions about their own operations and their personnel. If governors, business executives, and education leaders want to "stay the course" on standards-based reform—as many insisted just a few weeks ago at the third Education Summit—they must get serious about a teacher quality strategy based on the same logic. This report card shows, however, that most states have a long way to go.



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